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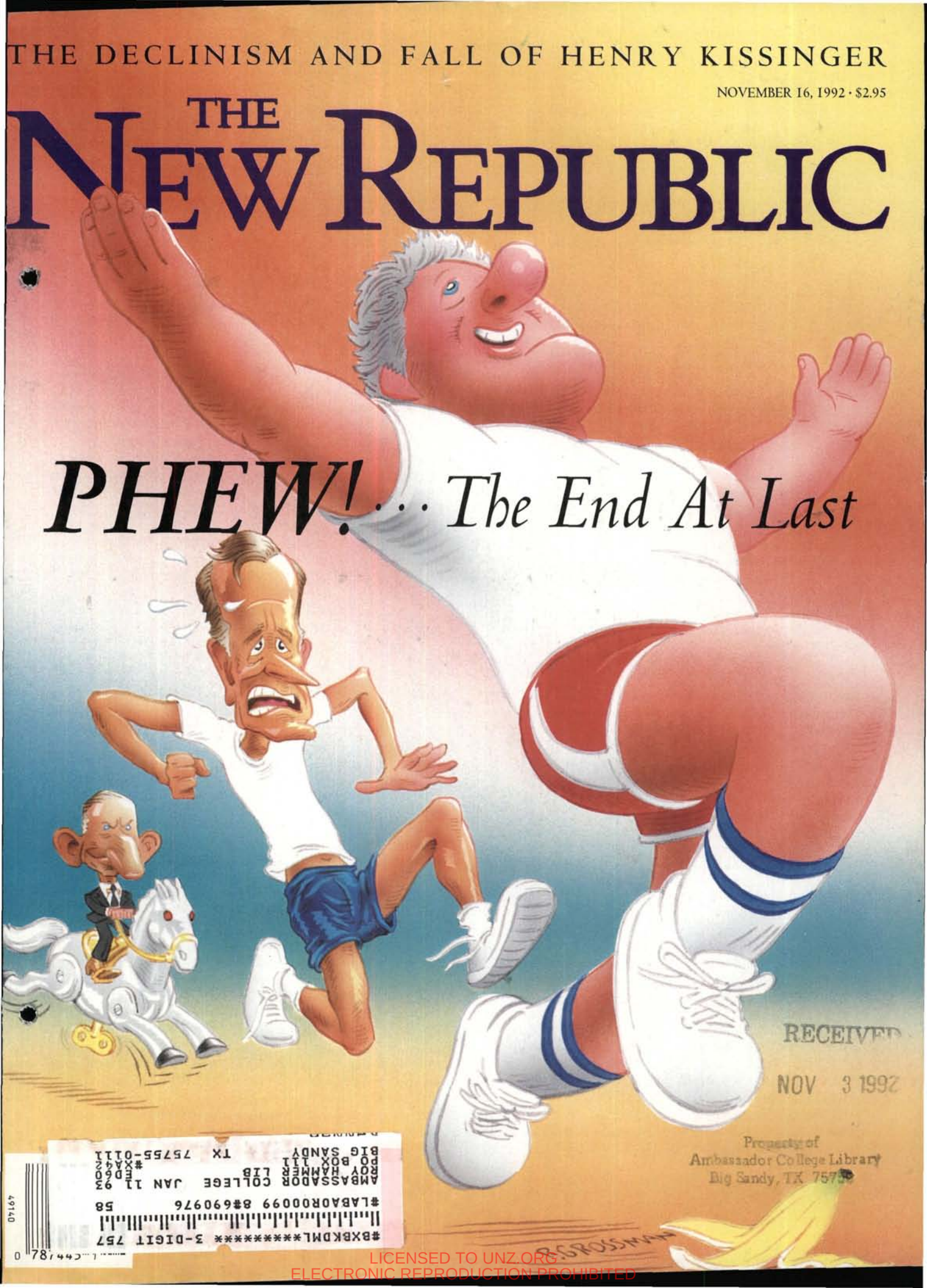

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Vouchers: Do We Want to Risk the Consequences?

BY ALBERT SHANKER, PRESIDENT OF THE AMERICAN FEDERATION OF TEACHERS

Most people, when they make a decision, believe they will get good results. But they usually also look at what will happen if they are wrong—at the down side of their decision. And sometimes the possible consequences of being wrong are so destructive that they change their minds about what path to take.

The chance that anybody will get polio is relatively small so it might seem reasonable not to bother having polio shots. But when people think about the possibility, however remote, of getting a crippling disease, the majority consider it worthwhile to eliminate even that small chance by going to get the shots.

Something similar was operating when we used to debate about developing weapons systems. Opponents said that these systems would cost many billions of dollars, and there was a very good chance that they would never be used. Supporters countered that, if we were wrong about how much protection we needed, we could be totally destroyed, and they argued that the weapons systems were worth the enormous cost.

The name for the habit of mind that leads people to consider the possible down sides of a decision is "prudence." Conservatives pride themselves on possessing it, but now, many people who consider themselves conservatives are applauding George Bush for advocating vouchers, which would permit public money to be spent on sending students to private and parochial schools. Mr. Bush says that his voucher plan would allow many poor children to go to private schools. He also claims that if public schools had to compete with private schools for students, we would see big improvements in public education. This sounds good, but it ignores the possible down sides. Here are a few things all those who are attracted to vouchers should be considering:

We may not have a chance to put Humpty Dumpty together again.

Many people think that returning to our current system will be easy if vouchers don't work out. That's not the case. Of course, only a handful of students might leave the public schools at first, but over time, classrooms will begin to empty out, and some schools and school districts will close down. Eventually, unused school buildings will be sold and converted into apartments or offices or they'll be demolished. So if vouchers turn out to be a fiasco, there will be no places in public schools for kids to go back to. And we can be sure that taxpayers won't be interested in spending billions of dollars to buy back the old schools or build new ones.

Some experiments or trials have consequences that are permanent and others do not. If you try a new kind of food and you don't like it, you don't have to eat it again. But experimenting with vouchers may be like dropping an egg to find out what will happen. There may be permanent and irreversible consequences, and we will not have a chance to put Humpty Dumpty together again.

The supporters of vouchers claim there will be a great variety of new schools. Some will undoubtedly be desirable, but the ones based on race, religion or ethnicity will move us away from our common school ideal. And there will undoubtedly be lunatic fringe schools—Jonestown or Klan or Farrakhan schools or schools where children might learn that they have a religious obligation to murder Salman Rushdie. Some people say that it will be up to the government to deal with that problem, but courts might well uphold the schools' right to teach what they choose on the basis of religious freedom. Such fringe schools would be rare because most parents don't want their kids to learn those kinds of things. But even a few schools that encouraged violence or taught children intolerance could be very disruptive to our society.

Many conservatives objected strongly to school busing in the 1970s. In some cases this was racially motivated, but a large number protested because they believed in the value of neighborhood schools, and busing threatened those schools. Vouchers are a busing program for the 1990s and they still threaten neighborhood schools. Vouchers mean that the kids who live next door to you—the ones you thought your children would be going to school with—might choose a school across town. And to fill the seats in your local school, kids might be bused in from another neighborhood. Neighborhood schools can link families as well as children, and they can be a kind of glue that holds a community together. At a time when many people are eager to try to strengthen their communities, vouchers can lead to their being further weakened.

People who favor vouchers claim that they will improve education. But if we try vouchers and these people are wrong, the results could be disastrous. The public schools have worked well for us for over 200 years. They've taught children from many different backgrounds to live together, and this is as important today as it has ever been. So why should we take a chance on separating kids out by race, religion and ethnicity the way private schools mostly do? Why should we further compromise our sense of community instead of trying to build it up? And why should we risk destroying the public schools when the energy and resources it would take to build and run a voucher system could be used to make our public schools what they ought to be?

MR. SHANKER'S COMMENTS APPEAR IN THIS AD UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE AMERICAN FEDERATION OF TEACHERS. READER CORRESPONDENCE IS INVITED. ADDRESS YOUR LETTERS TO MR. SHANKER AT THE AFT, 555 NEW JERSEY AVE., N.W., WASHINGTON, DC 20001. ©1992 BY ALBERT SHANKER.

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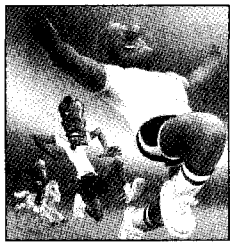

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CORRESPONDENCE

War stories

To the editors:

One reason I, a conservative, read THE NEW REPUBLIC is that I usually find in it a degree of intellectual integrity several steps ahead of the more typical "conservative bad, liberal good" (or vice versa) approach in other magazines. I was therefore disappointed in Sidney Blumenthal's attempt to turn George Bush's war record into a liability ("War Story," October 12). His attack merely fell flat.

To begin with, it was too obviously written by an outsider who understands neither naval aviation nor armed combat. Although Blumenthal may earn brownie points for knowing that the Army Air Corps did not become the Air Force until after World War II, he loses those points when he blithely assumes that there was a naval equivalent called the Naval Air Corps. No such branch of the Navy ever existed.

Now, the mere fact that Bush was shot down does not in itself prove that he was a hero. As Mark Twain might have written, *any* naval pilot could have accomplished the same thing. But faulty memory is endemic to the human species. Furthermore, what appears to a calm bystander to be a "puff of smoke" can look like a fireball to a pilot inside the cramped cockpit of a combat plane that has just sustained a hit. Perhaps—and this is not at all certain—Bush exaggerated because he was afraid. But would Blumenthal have reacted any more stoically? I don't think I would have. And, therefore, unless something a whole lot more substantial is presented as proof of Bush's "cowardice," the entire exercise merely sounds like a bleating chorus of "Bush, bad, Clinton good, Bush bad, Clinton good." Bush has plenty of *real* weaknesses; there is no need to come up with imaginary ones.

DEAN KENNEDY
Woodbridge, Virginia

To the editors:

In attempting to cast doubt on George Bush's bombing mission on Chichi Jima, September 2, 1944, Sidney Blumenthal makes factual errors and lacks understanding of basic U.S. carrier and submarine operations in World War II.

The U.S. Navy intelligence report of the Chichi Jima mission was not "oddly undated" and approved "sometime later," as Blumenthal asserts. The five-page Aircraft Action Report (AAR) on Strike Baker is clearly signed and dated September 2, 1944, and contains sections I through XIII. Following U.S. naval regulations, the report was approved by the captain of the USS *San Jacinto* on September 8, 1944, and forwarded through a chain of command procedure to Admiral Chester Nimitz, the commander of the Pacific Fleet. Nimitz received the AAR at 3:16 p.m. on November 1, 1944.

The crew members quoted by *The New York Post* were not participants on Strike Baker but were on Strike Able. Chester Mierzejewski was a quarter mile away attacking another target during Bush's mission, not 100 feet. Mierzejewski's physical description of Chichi Jima is wrong but fits a nearby island called Haha Jima. The *San Jacinto* records show he participated in Strike Dog, which bombed Haha Jima during the afternoon of September 2, 1944.

Blumenthal says Bush spent eight weeks on the submarine USS *Finback*. It was four weeks. He refers to the "confidential log" of the *Finback*. Wrong. It was the sub's Tenth War Patrol Report. A ship's log is an entirely different document.

Blumenthal says the reports on Strike Baker are "disputed accounts." Wrong. All reports, including those of Torpedo Squadron 51, Air Group 51, USS *San Jacinto*, Task Group 38.4, Task Force 38, Commander Fifth Fleet, plus the eyewitnesses on Strike Baker (with the exception of Mierzejewski), are unanimous.

Blumenthal is wrong when he writes that Bush was unable to bring himself to assault Clinton on the draft until a month after the GOP convention. Bush took aim at the war service evasion of both Clinton and Perot in a T.V. interview recorded at the White House on June 2, 1992. The interview is part of a documentary on Bush's World War II years produced by the Arts & Entertainment cable T.V. network. The documentary was previewed at the Republican National Convention in Houston during continuous showings from August 17-20, 1992.

ROBERT B. STINNETT, author of
George Bush: His World War II Years
Oakland, California

Sidney Blumenthal replies:

Robert Stinnett has a number of pedantic quibbles. The date on the intelligence report, though signed, is left blank. This oversight, which probably has no significance, has been reported in other accounts. On page one, however, the date of action is filled in. I wrote that "other crewmen" confirm in the 1988 *New York Post* story that Chester Mierzejewski had "the best view." Both Legare Hole, the executive officer of Bush's squadron, and Lawrence Mueller, a gunner on another plane, are quoted directly. Mierzejewski

Photo by Martha Stewart

This book shatters the prevailing myth of an ignorant public at the mercy of a one-way flow of communication filtered through and orchestrated by the media. The authors' surveys and in-depth interviews show, rather, that people are entirely capable of interpreting the news and making sense of issues.

"A very valuable work for scholars, journalists, and all others who share an interest in the strange and wonderful world of press/politics."—Marvin Kalb

COMMON KNOWLEDGE
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says he was about 100 feet away from Bush's plane. Indisputably, he was on the same mission. The document from the USS *Finback* is stamped "confidential" on every page. It is variously referred to as a war report and a log in many accounts, including Joe Hyams's *Flight of the Avenger* and M.W. Cagle's monograph in the Naval Aviation Museum Foundation journal. The various accounts, indeed, do conflict, especially Bush's own over time. Stinnett has simply grouped together those that don't, and from this stilted evidence made an assertion. Bush has never addressed the discrepancies. Nor has he explained the discrepancy between his attitude toward his sons' actions during the Vietnam War (e.g., his support for Jeb's effort to avoid the draft by means of seeking conscientious objector status) and Bill Clinton's.

False positive

To the editors:

Judith Randal discussed the medical industry's interest in mass breast cancer screening ("Mammoscam," October 12). She also mentioned the high rate (60 percent to 70 percent) of false positives on mammograms. What was not mentioned is that, in addition to the non-indicated initial screening exam, each false-positive test result generates further expenses in the way of follow-up X-rays, readings by radiologists, consultations with the woman's gynecologist, and (if my own case is typical) terror-motivated visits to mental health professionals. Last year two of my friends and I each had a false-positive mammogram. The relief of finally being "cleared" was brief: I just received a notice from the "Breast Cancer Screening Center" that it's time to start the whole process again.

GEORGANNE CHAPIN
Upper Nyack, New York

To the editors:

Judith Randal suggests that the incidence of breast cancer in women under 50 is insignificant and that there is little value in screening mammography for women in this age group. Yet a study by the Breast Cancer Detection and Demonstration Project (BCDDP) found that 21 percent of all breast cancers detected were in women aged 40-49. Furthermore, 35.4 percent of these were found only by mammography.

Randal points out that mammography misses about 10 percent of breast cancers. This is true, but she neglected to point out that the only other reliable screening tool is physical examination, which misses approximately 40 percent of breast cancers.

Finally, some studies suggest that cancer in the 40-49 age group grows faster than in older age groups. If this is true, more frequent rather than less frequent mammography will be necessary to detect cancer in the younger age groups before it spreads through the body.

ALAN N. ZUCKERMAN, M.D.
Assistant Professor of Radiology
Emory University School of Medicine
Atlanta, Georgia

Judith Randal replies:

The BCDDP study was neither a random nor a controlled study. Thus whether those women in it who were found to have breast cancer during their 40s survived longer than they would have if they had not been screened by mammography is unknown. And although 21 percent of the cancers found were in women under 50, many experts believe this high figure was due to selection bias—that is, since all

the participants knew they would get annual mammograms, a disproportionate number of younger women who had a good reasons to think they were at high risk enrolled. Controlled studies are the gold standard of efficacy. To date, no such study has conclusively shown that early detection by mammography improves the prognosis of those women who develop breast cancer before 50. Indeed, breast cancer death rates in these studies of younger women have been higher for mammography screenees than for their age-matched controls, although not to the point of statistical significance.

Gored

To the editors:

Your use of the Clinton-Gore Suck-Up Watch is hypocritical, given the glowing piece on the Democratic vice presidential candidate ("The Other Al," October 19) by THE NEW REPUBLIC's own Martin Peretz. Is it possible that no one on your staff has noticed this contradiction? Why can't others justifiably admire the Democratic ticket as much as THE NEW REPUBLIC's editor in chief?

MARK FEIERSTEIN
Alexandria, Virginia

To the editors:

Martin Peretz's latest hagiography of Al Gore states in passing that a growing number of people, even in Hollywood, support Tipper Gore's prescriptions. What's more, he implies that they're right to do so. I think, more likely, Hollywood liberals smell a winner in Clinton and are willing to turn a blind eye to Ms. Gore, maybe believing the alternative is worse or pretending that she's modified her views.

Let's see. Over the past few years, because of record labeling: it's now commonplace for record-sellers to be arrested by local police (labeling didn't protect them—it made them targets); record companies pressure their artists not to express themselves; many rack-jobbers—often the only musical game in town—refuse to carry "controversial" music; when available, labeled records are sometimes hidden behind counters, and not sold to teens.

Moreover, in Tipper Gore's ever widening wake: police refuse to work for tax-paying, law-abiding artists who say things they don't like; the FBI writes threatening letters to music companies; more states than not plan (clearly unconstitutional) music-labeling laws. And what nominally started as a simple warning for explicit language has, predictably, spread to repression based on political message.

All this, Tipper Gore, more than any other, has wrought. She's hurt the cause of freedom more than a hundred Dan Quayle speeches on family values could. Because some people imagine (and are encouraged to believe) today's music is more outrageous than ever, they then make the illogical leap that Tipper Gore's programs are more needed. In fact, regardless of lyric content, it's become clearer and clearer just how dangerous her plans are.

Maybe more people in Hollywood do think she's right. If so, shame on them. If she has a more prominent perch next year, the fight will have to continue, redoubled.

THOMAS LINDERMAN
Los Angeles, California

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FROM WASHINGTON

Stay mad

Trust. Character. "Waffles." "An incredible desire to say anything on all sides of every issue." This is George Bush's endgame against Bill Clinton. Incredible is just the word.

Forget the big stuff. Forget read-my-lips. Forget all that babble about a balanced budget amendment without ever producing anything like a balanced budget. Forget the ever shifting and demonstrably false stories about Bush's role in the arms-for-hostages deal. Consider just a few episodes of this campaign itself. "Our job," says Bush campaign hatchet woman Mary Matalin, "is to get voters to concentrate not on the last four years but on what would happen with Clinton in the White House." Fine. Let's forget the past four years. But can we remember, say, the past four weeks?

On October 23, at a rally at a Boeing plant in Pennsylvania, Vice President Dan Quayle announced a $550 million contract for that plant to build the V-22 Osprey aircraft. The contract could eventually be worth $2.4 billion and thousands of jobs. Until July, the Bush administration adamantly opposed development of the Osprey.

As mentioned here last week, the administration has been distributing grants for the development of high-speed passenger rail routes in key primary states. Bush spent his first three years trying to kill all federal passenger rail subsidies.

In June, the administration sided with organized labor in a Supreme Court dispute over federal construction contracts. On October 25, Bush imposed by executive order the policy he had opposed in June. The Associated Builders and Contractors, a non-union trade group, endorsed Bush-Quayle the same day.

In his Republican convention speech, Bush demanded a 5 percent pay cut for upper-income federal employees. He had previously pushed for and signed a large pay increase for this group.

On October 24, Bush signed the energy bill. It contains thirteen—count 'em—new taxes. Most are both trivial and reasonable. But it is Bush who just weeks ago renewed his no-new-taxes pledge ("ever, ever"), and Bush who chose—in his famous 128-tax-increases attack on Clinton—to define a tax increase as any revenue enhancer, no matter how trivial. Thus he's broken Pledge Two already. So much for trust on taxes.

Sometimes Bush soars beyond hypocrisy into a mental region where you have to wonder if he's even been listening to himself. Speaking at a Florida retirement community on October 3, he accused Clinton of "using the oldest trick in the world—trying to scare America's seniors" by suggesting that Bush would cut Medicare benefits. In the next breath, Bush warned that Clinton's health care reforms would involve severe Medicare cuts. "I won't let anyone take a knife to your Medicare benefits," he promised.

Jim Baker. He's going to be secretary of state again in Bush's second term. No, he's going to be domestic economic czar. No, he's going to solve all our economic problems in a few months and then return to State. He's going to give a speech explaining it all. No, he's not going to give a speech. The Baker Waffle is just a metaphor for the Bush campaign waffle style in general. Issues—family values, the Clinton Moscow trip—are unveiled, road tested, then dropped, amid protestations that nothing is changing, that the press is responsible for raising these issues, or that they haven't really gone away.

The economy. A) It's not broken, despite what the media would have you think. B) I've got a brand-new plan to fix it. C) I'm going to fire all the people (Brady, Darman, Boskin) responsible for both the current lack of problems and the plan to fix them.

Then there are Bush's waffles on Clinton's waffles. He's tried to have it both ways about whether the draft issue is Clinton's avoidance of military service—a history Clinton shares with most of the Vietnam generation—or Clinton's changing story about it. When pressed, Bush insists self-righteously that it is merely the latter. But he doesn't shy away from innuendos about the former: flinging around the term "draft dodger," accusing Clinton of "evading" the draft (which is illegal), and saying that service "in uniform" is "a good criterion for being commander in chief" (a clever formulation that takes care of the Quayle problem, although it leaves open the question of how writing press releases on weekends in Indiana is good training for the presidency).

Bush has been introduced at rallies by others who have said flat-out that Clinton is "disloyal to his country." At a rally on October 24, with Bush present, a close friend of the president's told the crowd that Clinton is "a sissy. You can tell that by the way his lips hang, by the way his rear end swishes when he walks."

Having it both ways like this is standard practice for the Bush sleaze machine—a practice developed in the happier flags-'n'-furloughs days of 1988. The trick is to combine raw innuendo about your opponent's manhood and/or patriotism with a more technical fallback argument you can cart out with protests of innocence when your intentions are challenged.

In the third presidential debate, Bush said, "There hasn't been one single scintilla of evidence" that American technology played a role in Iraq's nuclear program. In a subsequent interview, CNN's Charles Bierbauer asked the president whether this was "kind of a waffle." Bush replied, "You've got me confused with Clinton on waffling." In fact, "waffle" is the wrong word here. What Bush committed was a lie. There is evidence beyond dispute that American technology was used in Iraq's nuclear program.

Bush's campaign ads have been full of lies. A radio ad declares, "Bill Clinton's policies have been called fiercely protectionist by papers like *The Washington Post*." In fact, the *Post* endorsed Clinton for president, specifically praising his rejection of protectionism. Pressed for documentation, the Bush people dredged up a 1985 *Post* editorial criticizing a congressional textile bill that Clinton apparently favored. The 1985 editorial does not mention Clinton.

Another radio ad warns that Clinton's proposed energy tax will cost every family hundreds of dollars. Clinton does not propose an energy tax. Al Gore's famous book endorses the concept of energy taxes to encourage conservation, but specifically says that these should be replacements for other taxes, not net tax increases.

Finally, there is the search of Clinton's passport file, looking (unsuccessfully) for dirt. The initial line was, "There is no inappropriate behavior in this at all": merely a desire to promptly satisfy press inquiries. When it developed that the search had indeed violated freedom-of-information procedures, and had included Clinton's mother (whom the press had never inquired about), the line changed: blame "low-level people" and "mid-level clerks." When it then developed that the search had involved a bizarre late-night expedition by four senior passport office officials, that defense too was deep-sixed.

Meanwhile, *The Wall Street Journal* reported last week on some suspicious international business dealings of Bush's sons, Jeb and Neil. It took the State Department almost six months to answer the *Journal*'s freedom-of-information request on that one. Promptness did not seem to be a paramount concern.

Trust? Character? Waffles? Slick? Don't forget to vote.

MICHAEL KINSLEY

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

NOVEMBER 16, 1992

CUCKOO'S NEST

The second coming of Ross Perot was no more spontaneous, but it was more worrying, than the first. It is now clear that his withdrawal from the race last July was both premeditated and involuntary, a function of cunning and loopiness, conducted in the same spirit as the meticulous crimes of deeply disturbed individuals. By this shrewd maneuver, he managed to escape the media scrutiny that had undermined his credibility, keep his "volunteers" on the payroll, prepare a barrage of infomercials for the final week of the race, and remain a viable candidate for the presidency. At the same time, he was convinced that his daughter was the subject of a lesbian smear campaign by the White House, that her wedding would be disrupted by minions of George Bush, and that he was wiretapped.

This pattern of behavior should come as a surprise to no one. We were among the first to point out Perot's paranoid delusions (see "Perotnoia," June 15, and "The Mission," July 6). In retrospect, however, even Sidney Blumenthal's pioneering reporting seems to have understated Perot's instability. What is extraordinary is that Perot should have been taken seriously by the media and by the other candidates when he announced his preposterous re-entry into the race on October 1. Perot is not a serious candidate. He is interesting solely because his candidacy represents a new and dangerous attempt at a populist, media-based putsch.

For a short while, it looked as if it might work. Intimidated by his popularity, neither Bush nor Clinton had the integrity to expose what they knew was his phoniness. At no point did they challenge him to flesh out his empty homilies with particulars or question his reckless demagoguery and presumption. The press, too, was laggard, vacillating first between hype and hysteria and, almost too late, exposing his irrationality. Thus Perot evaded criticism from all quarters for several weeks, while bombarding the public with paid propaganda. The result was a late surge, which almost changed the dynamics of the entire race.

Perot was foiled by his own relentless bizarreness and by the exposure he craved. (He can run but he can't hide.) Those who fret that the idiot culture has supplanted the responsible media should take note of what happened. Hard though he tried, Perot could not isolate himself from probing coverage. The "60 Minutes" exposé of his crackpot charges against the Bush campaign was a case study in the press's classic role, inflicting accountability on a politician who sought to evade it. A week before the election, the real Perot emerged: a fantasist whose gullibility is indistinguishable from willful deception, a natural tyrant who cannot contain his rage in the face of criticism.

What the press has yet to do, however, is draw out the connection between Perot's personal behavior and his broader political message. They are of a piece. The Perot who imagines Vietnamese Black Panthers descending from Canada to kill his family is the Perot who daydreams about Japan wielding insidious control over the American economy. The Perot who talks about Americans practicing nineteenth-century capitalism while our competitors unload enemy cars onto our docks is the Perot who believes he is wiretapped by forces at the very top of our government. The Perot who believes George Bush and James Baker are planning to disrupt his daughter's wedding is the same Perot who believes foreign lobbyists are running Congress.

We do, of course, face corruption in Washington. We also face serious economic problems: the deficit, an education system unprepared for the global economy, an entrenched underclass, and declining industries in various sectors. But they bear no relationship to Perot's sweeping, black vista of collapse; and dealing with these problems will be helped not by pandering to Perot's nightmare, but by confronting it. Perot sees America as he sees his immediate environment: a place where unnamed, hostile forces bear down with orchestrated relentlessness and only an act of personal force can wrest free of them. He is wrong about his own life; and he is wrong about the country. A vote for him next Tuesday is not a legitimate action of democratic protest; it is an affirmation of the politics of pathology. •

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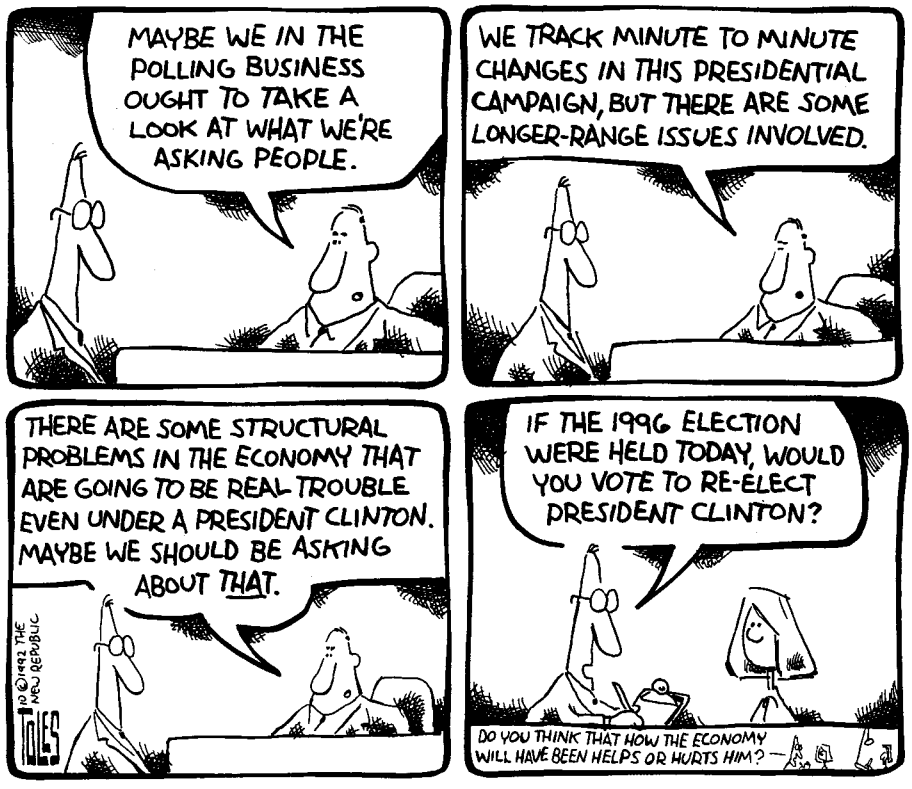
NOTEBOOK

BUSHISM OF THE WEEK: "And also, if you haven't detected, I'm a little sore at the national media. Let me tell you something. Remember what Harry Truman said, 'They wouldn't know'—I better be careful. Well, I better not say that. I got the—they're mad at me anyway." —October 25, Sioux Falls, South Dakota

CLINTON SUCK-UP WATCH: "[T]he Governor, for all his policy-wonkness, exhibited a genuine love for and total engagement in the political process. His wife Hillary and aides were often hard pressed to persuade him to catch some sleep. Clinton frequently wanted to go on to yet another rally and make another speech well past midnight, then sit up talking strategy with his campaign team almost till dawn.... Clinton the candidate is closer to Clinton the private man than almost any other campaigner of recent memory. The image the governor projects on the stump and on T.V. is emphatically not designed by handlers. Clinton himself, powerfully aided by his wife Hillary, is the source of the message and the big picture strategy." —George J. Church, *Time*, November 2


MAYBE WE IN THE POLLING BUSINESS OUGHT TO TAKE A LOOK AT WHAT WE'RE ASKING PEOPLE.
WE TRACK MINUTE TO MINUTE CHANGES IN THIS PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN, BUT THERE ARE SOME LONGER-RANGE ISSUES INVOLVED.
THERE ARE SOME STRUCTURAL PROBLEMS IN THE ECONOMY THAT ARE GOING TO BE REAL TROUBLE EVEN UNDER A PRESIDENT CLINTON. MAYBE WE SHOULD BE ASKING ABOUT THAT.
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IF THE 1996 ELECTION WERE HELD TODAY, WOULD YOU VOTE TO RE-ELECT PRESIDENT CLINTON?
DO YOU THINK THAT HOW THE ECONOMY WILL HAVE BEEN HELPS OR HURTS HIM?

NON-STARTER: Hardly a day goes by without another revelation of the Bush administration's appeasement of Iraq—from the administration's indifference to the gassing of thousands of Kurds at Halabja to its involvement in the byzantine scandals over agricultural credits and the BNL. Bush has denied everything on the lengthening list of particulars, but he has admitted what they amount to—"We were trying to bring Saddam Hussein into the family of nations"—a rationale that has the virtue, at least, of fitting with the goofy, personalistic geopolitics of George Bush. But it doesn't explain James Baker's motivation. Now we have a little help on the matter. On November 9, 1989, Baker wrote Tariq Aziz, the Iraqi foreign minister, reassuring him of more credits in the works. But there was one other matter Baker had in mind. Could the Iraqis "weigh in" with the Palestinians to prod them to cooperate in a way "enabling us to get an Israeli-Palestinian dialogue launched"? The secretary's pitiful plea shows how little he understood what affects change in the Middle East. It also suggests how fixated Baker was on finding new ways to put pressure on Israel, even to the extent of aiding the Baath butchers. The Bush-Baker gift to Saddam was as if FDR had sent $1 billion to Hitler in order to get him to persuade Mussolini to negotiate with the French on Italian claims to Somaliland.

HAT TRICK: It may be too late for anyone to care, but it's worth pointing out that Jim Baker's management of the Bush campaign from the White House violates both a long-standing ethical injunction and the administration's own stated policy. In November 1991 White House counsel C. Boyden Gray sent around a detailed memo advising personnel how to avoid restrictions prohibiting the use of government resources on behalf of the campaign. "The simplest rule to follow, however," he wrote, "is the common-sense instruction that anything that is obviously campaign-related should not be done here, whether or not one could 'legally' justify doing it here." This was in accord with precedent. In 1976 Howard Callaway resigned as secretary of the Army to head Gerald Ford's re-election bid; in 1980 Hamilton Jordan left the White House to work for the DNC on Carter's behalf; in 1984 Ed Rollins left the Reagan White House to run Reagan's re-election. Indeed, Baker himself left his post as secretary of the treasury to run Bush's 1988 campaign. The Bush campaign is receiving $55 million in public money. Why should we have to pay Baker's White House salary on top of it?

CABLED: In secret correspondence that surfaced earlier this year, it was disclosed that by 1983, Reagan

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administration wise men had eliminated the major legal obstacle to aid to Iraq: Iraq's official status, on the State Department list, as a "terrorist" country. The rationale was that Iraq had given up its support of terrorism and expelled an (unnamed) leader of a notorious terrorist band. Newly disclosed State Department documents and cables also show, however, that the administration was soon informed that the removal of Iraq from the list was premature. A secret 1985 State Department chronology reports that Saddam's foreign minister confirmed Baghdad had granted diplomatic "immunities" to Abu Abbas, mastermind of the *Achille Lauro* hijacking. A 1986 intelligence briefing for the secretary of state reported that following the hijacking, Abbas apparently was "permitted to take refuge" in Iraq. A June 1990 cable reported that Abbas "continues to enjoy access to Iraq" and that his group was openly issuing communiqués about its activities from its Baghdad office. Perhaps it is comforting to know that while the Reagan and Bush administrations lied to the public, at least they knew the truth themselves.

MAJOR WORRY: News from Britain suggests the following advice to voters wavering in their support for a new administration: hang in there. In last April's elections, John Major's margin of victory came from many newly minted Labour supporters getting cold feet in the polling booths. They now regret it. Major's government has since shown all the signs of a spent force. The center of his economic policy—the pound's membership in the European exchange rate mechanism—was removed in the great fiscal crisis of September; the core of his foreign policy—the Maastricht Treaty—is in intensive care; the economy, which was supposed to revive under continued Tory management, has sunk further, paralyzed by low consumer confidence. These crises have been met by the government with a wild flailing that makes Bush look consistent. A fresh government would at least have had the energy to tackle these problems more aggressively than the husk of a thirteen-year regime—and would have had more resources to recover. Message: a mediocre, exhausted administration may not be a safe bet if re-elected; it could be disastrous.

JUST FOR THE RECORD: For those TNR readers planning to vote for the president on the draft issue, we offer the following brief recap of the draft records of major Bush-Quayle officials. None of the top eligible members of the Bush team—those born between 1942 and 1952—fought in Vietnam. After a student deferment, Richard Darman got a letter from his doctor to avoid the draft. Marlin Fitzwater twice got student deferments and later, in 1966, got into the Air National Guard. C. Boyden Gray, though he served in the Marine Reserves, never went to Vietnam. Attorney General William Barr spent his years of eligibility in college, a master's program, and law school. Bill Kristol, chief Quayle aide, got a student deferment. Quayle spokesman David Beckwith got two student deferments and twice failed his physical. Transportation Secretary Andrew Card got a marriage deferment. RNC chairman Rich Bond and Bush-Quayle campaign spokesman Charlie Black both got student deferments. Not to mention Bush appointee Clarence Thomas, who after a clerical deferment got three student deferments and also managed to fail his physical exam two years after passing it. We do not present this material because we think it reflects poorly on the complicated, personal decisions these men made many, many years ago. We merely print it for the sake of full disclosure.

BROADCAST NEWS: The evening after Ross Perot's meltdown press conference, two of the three networks went after the Texan with all the ferocity his unbalanced performance deserved. NBC News said, "Perot's bizarre allegations raise more questions about his character, truthfulness, and fitness to be president." CBS News consultant Joe Klein remarked that "the performance today at that press conference raises doubts again whether this guy has the temperament to be president of the United States." Meanwhile, ABC was curiously non-committal with the bulk of its coverage, with Morton Dean reporting that Perot "showed up unexpectedly at his campaign's regular morning briefing," and noting that his new story about why he dropped out was different from his July 16 version. According to *The New York Times*, ABC is the beneficiary of $11.3 million of Perot's advertising expenditure through October 26, compared with $4 million for CBS and $4.5 million for NBC. Just noting the coincidence.

GUFF PATROL: "Sitting around after some trifling dinner, where the wine bill alone came to more than most people's rent, and while I dare say sneering at the concerns of ordinary working Americans, Martin Amis and I once evolved an after-banquet word game. The point (not, you understand, that we felt it *needed* a point) was to take any well-known phrase or title containing the word 'heart' and replace that with the simple word 'dick.'" —Christopher Hitchens in the November issue of *Vanity Fair*

AWARD: After an unseemly delay, and an embarrassment of applying riches, the judges of the Marie Syrkin Fellowship in Letters in Jerusalem are delighted to announce the winners for 1992. They are Adam Michnik, the noted Polish intellectual and one of the moving forces in the democratization of his country, and Peter Cole, an American poet and translator who is at work on a remarkable translation into English of Samuel Ha-Nagid, one of the great Spanish Jewish poets of the Middle Ages. Applications for 1993 should reach these offices, care of the Marie Syrkin Fellowship, before February 15, 1993. They should include a short description of the applicant's literary or scholarly project and a taste of recent work. •

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THE SHRUB FILE

WEDDINGATE

By Douglas G. McGrath

Monday, October 19, 1992

Tonight was the third presidential debate, and I'm glad to say the Shrub bounced back. Finally, he seemed in charge. I think Dr. Lee is closing in on the right dosage.

Near the end, the Shrub did that laugh of his, which sounds like a Pekinese after a tough climb, and he said, "There was a lot of talk out there after that last go-round out there in Richmond, the one where the actual audience got to chuck spears at—I mean, *ask questions* of us—or *to* us or *at* us or whatever—hey, *didn't go to Oxford* so don't always know my way prepositionally—and all those $500 talking heads from the Sunday morning yak shows were saying how I, that I, about me looking at the Bush Mickey Mouse on the presidential wrist—three times, they said I checked where Mickey's mitts were pointing, but I—hey, but I, hey—I'll tell you what I was thinking, and this isn't 90/90 hindsight talking. This guy, I was just, and so let me click it off for you: I was just thinking how long this guy, the Waffle-meister over there at that podium over there, old Elvis Jr. there, how little time he has left until I clean his clock!"

After the debate, as Agent Banks and I were putting the Shrubs and Crisco in their limo, Mr. Perot grabbed the Shrub's hand. His tone was sharp and he said, "Hold on a minute folks. Now listen. I know I'm just a businessman and you're the president of the whole United States, but I still want some help on my daughter's wedding." Mrs. Shrub perked up and said, "Well, I'd go with a high-necked white dress with a long lace train. Have plenty of finger foods and . . . "

Perot snapped, "Unless you're brain-dead, lady, unless you're too stupid to work the fifth shift at the Taco-Tico, you ought to know that my daughter already had her wedding *in August* and that this little girl you're married to tried to disrupt it!" Mrs. Shrub shrank back, as much as that was possible for her, and Perot went on crossly. "World-class daughter. Deserved a world-class wedding. You can bet your hat I gave her one. Love her too much not to. Listen up, folks. It's pretty simple: if you don't love your daughter, don't vote for me. Is that clear? But I *know* y'all are behind this Daughtergate business because two fellas from inside the White House called and told me. So quit giving me a twenty-five-cent answer to a two-dollar question. Otherwise—I'm not kidding on this one, folks—I'll go public with it!"

He stalked off. Crisco smiled. "Good," he said, without moving his lips. "That's just what we want." Mrs. Shrub sternly took Shrub's arm. "Were you really going to ruin his daughter's wedding?" The Shrub said, "Negatory." Mrs. Shrub persisted, "But what about the two men who tipped him?" The Shrub made her swear not to tell anyone, even Millie, but the two men were me and Banks. Once she realized it was just a ruse to make Perot go insane, she said, "How super" and reached into her purse and gave us each a Slim Jim as a reward.

October 27

To quote the Vice Shrub, nothing's getting better every day. The Shrub's main goal now is not to get fewer electoral votes than Alf Landon, who got eight. I heard him today in Crisco's office. Crisco was telling him to get up off the floor, and the Shrub said, "O.K. I'm up. Up and rising. But, Jimbo, I can't help it: I'm an electoral-vote-wrapped-up kind of guy, so, please, *please swear to me* on Atwater's grave: you won't let me Out-Alf Alf!"

Within the last few days he's been in Montana, New Mexico, Utah, and Iowa, working the crowds. Well, not *crowds*, exactly. More like *scatterings*. But still, he's trying. He went to a Waffle House to poke at Clinton. (Mrs. Shrub and Banks each ordered the Lumberjack Special. Banks couldn't finish his.) Yesterday, the Shrub flew to American Samoa to whip up a scattering there. He announced that American Samoa would be receiving massive hurricane relief. This was very popular, as they hadn't had a hurricane.

November 2

Election eve. Tonight, the Shrub made a final appeal to the nation. For good luck, underneath his suit he wore his old Yale baseball uniform. But he didn't sound strong: "And so let me just say please—*pleasepleasepleaseplease!*—I *really* need your vote. I won't raise taxes again *even if they make me. That's* why it happened last time. *They made me!* There were *more of them.* Outnumbered. But there's going to be—128 tax hikes, doesn't anybody care about that? How many times do I have to rub your noses in it?—there's going to be a thousand points of—no, no, I mean 150, there's going to be 150 new members of Congress and they won't make me do anything! Because because—well, just send me a Congress that won't pick on me so much and we can get the job done!" He looked desperate here. "I knocked Saddam out of Kuwait, I fought the Big Brown One down there in Panama and now he's somebody's wife in a Miami jail, and I fought, just a couple of weeks ago, I fought that chicken. Some may laugh at that, but I could have gotten salmonella!"

Around midnight, Banks and I took him out to the horseshoe pit. It was pretty dark, the moon blacked

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hope.

If anyone should ask you the price of hope, tell them it's 65¢ a day. That's what it costs to sponsor a child through Save the Children.

You give so much more than money when you sponsor a child through Save the Children.

Many children around the world lead lives of such excruciating poverty they have given up hope of ever escaping. They face illness, hunger and deprivation — struggles their families have known for generations.

But you can help change that. You can make a lasting difference.

You can help bring pure water to a child's community, a school to his village, or health care to his family — the things that can bring hope to a child's eyes, strength to his body, and nourishment to his mind.

You'll have the opportunity to know this child personally, through photographs and reports. You can even exchange letters if you wish. You'll feel the personal reward of seeing what your love and support can do.

Because 60 years of experience has taught us that direct handouts are the least effective way of helping children, your sponsorship contributions are not distributed in this way. Instead, combined with other sponsors', they are used to help children *in the most effective way possible* — by helping the entire community with projects and services such as health care, education, food production, and nutrition.

How Save the Children's funds are spent. 85% of all dollars spent goes right to programs that benefit kids most.

Sponsoring a child through Save the Children costs only $20 a month. The cost is so little, the rewards are so great. Won't you become a Save the Children sponsor today? Fill out the coupon below, and help bring hope to a child.

Mail this coupon...and bring hope to a child.

☐ **Yes,** I want to become a Save the Children sponsor. My first monthly sponsorship contribution of $20 is enclosed. I prefer to sponsor a ☐ boy ☐ girl ☐ either in the area I've checked below.

☐ **Where the need is greatest**

☐ Africa	☐ Caribbean	☐ Middle East
☐ American Indian	☐ Himalayas	☐ South America
☐ Asia	☐ Central America	☐ United States

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☐ Please send me more information.

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NR 11/16/2

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out by clouds. A slight breeze stirred the trees, and we could hear Mrs. Shrub snoring through an open window. For good luck tomorrow, we gave him his favorite—a peach daiquiri.

It's against regulations for Banks and me to drink on duty, but tonight was special. We toasted Shrub and told him he was going to win. He seemed touched—he cried for about fifteen minutes. I hope I'm wrong, but I told Banks that I thought nine electoral votes might be optimistic.

DOUGLAS G. MCGRATH is a New York writer.

Clinton's confidence trick.

COOL HAND BILL

By Fred Barnes

ELON COLLEGE, NORTH CAROLINA

Bill Clinton was minimally unnerved as his lead in the presidential race dwindled. Between campaign stops in Michigan on October 25, he did the Sunday crossword puzzle in *The New York Times*, the whole puzzle. Clinton does crossword puzzles for relaxation. He's mastered the ability to carry on a conversation, or listen to a briefing and ask questions, while knocking off a puzzle. His aides joked about putting a crossword puzzle on the podium for the third presidential debate so he could work on it between answers and stay loose. Clinton didn't need it. He was never rattled.

Clinton is the smoothest, least uptight politician I've ever seen. He may be churning inside (though I doubt it), but he never lets on. With the draft and Gennifer Flowers controversies engulfing him in New Hampshire last winter, Clinton managed to deliver calm, cogent speeches. I heard him in Exeter one night, and you'd have thought he'd just come from a massage, not a pow-wow with hysterical advisers. Eight months later, with the White House almost in his grasp, he was still laid-back but serious, a nice combination. How's he able to be so cool? My conclusion is that Clinton understands how much better a politician and candidate he is than anyone else (although that doesn't necessarily translate into leadership). He's enormously likable, reassuring, persuasive, and clever. His personality and glibness are potent political weapons. He seems confident that he can talk his way out of any jam, small or large. And his confidence, given the jams he's talked his way out of, is completely justified. By comparison, handling mere mortals such as Paul Tsongas, Jerry Brown, George Bush, and Ross Perot is a piece of cake for Clinton.

My elders insist Clinton is no John F. Kennedy, but I think otherwise. Like JFK, he's a charming opportunist of no fixed ideology. He has Kennedy's gift for making people like him, even people who've already decided they don't. JFK was the best politician, though not the best leader, of his generation, with Ronald Reagan a close second. Clinton is the best of his generation, and no one else is close. In fact, he's so appealing that he gets away with things other politicians wouldn't dare. In a span of three days in late October, he presented himself as a New Democrat, an old-fashioned Democrat, and not much of a Democrat at all. Reporters covering Clinton accepted these rapid image changes as perfectly natural. For Clinton they were. But when Bush tries the same thing, he appears awkward, unnatural, and transparent. The press eats him alive. But that's not Clinton's fault. Bush has the advantage of incumbency. Clinton has the advantage of extraordinary charm and a superlative political sense.

In Wisconsin on October 24, Clinton suddenly cast himself in the image of Perot, who was then gaining ground at Clinton's expense. Clinton was an outsider, not beholden to the ways of Washington or political parties. "If I tried to run the government in my home state the way they do it in Washington where every time something doesn't work out the president blames Congress and Congress blames the president and everybody gets off the hook by pointing the finger and blaming one another, we'd be in a terrible fix," he declared. Clinton said he understands why people feel that a special few get "a special deal" in our political system. "One reason is that the political leadership of our country has not been very responsible." Perot might have said it more colorfully, but not much better.

The next day in Michigan, Clinton voiced a few more Perotisms ("I'll wake up every day in that White House with the idea that it's not my house, it's your house"). But mostly he sounded more like a conventional labor Democrat. He was introduced by Mario Cuomo—it was their only joint appearance of the fall campaign—at a rally in Sterling Heights, a hotbed of working-class Reagan Democrats outside Detroit. Rich people have invested money reaped from Republican "trickle-down economics," Cuomo said, "but not in Michigan and Ohio and Pennsylvania. They invested in Taiwan, in junk bonds, and BMWs." Clinton got in a class-conscious mood, stressing protectionism and union jobs. He zinged Bush for lifting tariffs on Japanese multipurpose vehicles. "That's the kind of thing I will not do if I'm president of the United States," he said. What he intends to do, Clinton said, is increase manufacturing jobs. Rather than have a 100 percent service economy, "somebody's got to make something in this country," Clinton said. Twenty-eight percent of Japanese jobs and 32 percent of German jobs are in manufacturing, he said. "We're at 16.5 percent and dropping because we

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have no strategy to put the American people in good jobs."

On a bus trip across North Carolina a day later, he was Mr. New Democrat. In Winston-Salem, he stressed tougher enforcement of child support laws, making welfare "a second chance, not a way of life," being "tough and smart on crime," and starting "community-based boot camps" for young offenders. "I don't want bigger government, but I want better government," Clinton insisted. Nor is he against the wealthy. "I want to make more millionaires than Bush and Quayle [did]." Here at Elon College, he boasted of balancing budgets and blamed Bush for re-regulation. He said he wants "to empower people to take charge of their lives and then hold them responsible." And he proclaimed himself the only presidential candidate who "never has been part of the lobbying scene in Washington."

Of the three poses, Clinton is most appealing (and convincing) as a New Democrat. And that's chiefly how he has cast himself in the closing weeks of the campaign. In Seattle on October 22, he attacked Bush as a tax-and-spender. The president signed "the second-biggest tax increase on the middle class in history." Citing the Heritage Foundation as his source, he said Bush "raised spending higher than any president in the last thirty years" and "increased regulation on the private sector more than anybody in the last twenty years." The best ad produced by the Clinton campaign, called "Leaders," also plays the New Democrat theme. It extols Clinton and running mate Al Gore as "a new generation of Democrats ... [who] don't think the way the old Democratic Party did." They're for welfare reform and the death penalty, and they've "rejected the old tax-and-spend politics." In truth, they haven't. Their economic plan includes $150 billion in new taxes and $220 billion in new spending. It's a proposal Walter Mondale would feel comfortable with, and I'm still amazed Clinton adopted it. If he loses to Bush, this plan will be a major reason. It left Clinton vulnerable to the charge that he's a high taxer. I'm even more amazed that the press has failed to note that new taxes and spending clash with Clinton's professed yen for entrepreneurial, non-bureaucratic, free market solutions. Clinton's contradictions don't interest reporters, another measure of his surpassing political skill.

The irony of the campaign is that Clinton was slowed only by his success. Three weeks before Election Day, the media took a Clinton victory as a given, and began dissecting a Clinton presidency and speculating on Cabinet members. "That hurt us more than any negative ad George Bush has run," says Clinton strategist Paul Begala. It shifted the focus of the campaign from Bush's record to Clinton's potential character in office. To combat Bush's charge that he can't be trusted, Clinton could hardly say, "I am not untrustworthy." The only alternative was to go negative, questioning Bush's trustworthiness. This, in turn, made Clinton less attractive a candidate. By definition, a negative campaign isn't optimistic. And optimism is what voters crave, whether it comes from FDR, JFK, Reagan, or Clinton.

He gave them a full dose in his closing statement at the third debate on October 19. Clinton's brand of change "can open up a whole new world of opportunities for America.... I want a country where people are coming together across the lines of race and religion and income. I know we can do better. It won't take miracles and it won't happen overnight, but we can do much, much better if we have the courage to change." But his subsequent speeches were highly negative.

I plead guilty to grossly underestimating Clinton's ability (see "Why Clinton Can't Win," TNR, May 4) as a candidate. Win or lose, he's changed most people's opinion of him. Heck, even I like him. And he makes practically no mistakes. In the debates, I counted only three. He mispronounced "chameleon," a word he's understandably uncomfortable with. He bragged that he'd be his own economic czar, allowing Bush to snap, "That's what worries me." And on the draft issue he made this claim: "You know, I'd been in public life a long time and no one had ever questioned my role." Oh, yes, they had, as early as his first race for Arkansas governor in 1978. But neither Bush nor the press challenged him on this statement, a stroke of luck for Clinton. There's an old saying in sports that it's better to be lucky than good. As a politician, Clinton is lucky *and* good. •

ON THE HILL

TRADE NIMBYS

By Melissa Robinson

In 1989, as the world watched Communist regimes tumble across Eastern Europe, an impassioned Congress voted to send nearly $533 million to Poland and Hungary. The aid package—which was more than twice the amount requested by President Bush and $60 million more than was in the foreign aid coffers—included programs to finance training for farmers, businesspeople, and others in need of free market skills. Eager to reward nations that cast off Communist rule, Congress also extended Hungary's preferential trade status, made both countries eligible for reduced tariffs on certain exports here, and offered risk insurance to U.S. businesses for investing there.

Now it's 1992. Eastern Europe, having won its politi-

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cal freedom, is mired in the struggle for economic liberalization. And yet earlier this year some of the very lawmakers who voted for the major aid and trade measures initiated a campaign to kill petitions by Eastern European countries for lower import tariffs under a government program called the Generalized System of Preferences.

Congressional objections to these Eastern European imports were grounded in the kinds of parochial, protectionist interests that have fueled countless trade disputes. But the Eastern European campaign was remarkable in its hypocrisy. By keeping these products out of the hands of U.S. consumers, Congress diluted the impact of its own foreign aid package. "It's just crazy for somebody to expect taxpayers to send tens of billions in economic aid to Eastern Europe ... and, at the same time, not [provide] access to the U.S. market," says Bryan Riley of Citizens for a Sound Economy, a free trade group.

At least twenty House and Senate members who supported the major Eastern Europe aid programs in 1989 and 1990 later opposed the trade petitions. Foremost among them was Representative David Obey of Wisconsin, the chairman of the House Appropriations foreign operations subcommittee, who was instrumental in crafting the aid packages. In 1990 he eloquently defended the foreign aid budget, explaining that it cost the individual taxpayer just "$1.20 per week—less than the cost of a six-pack."

But Obey's concerns about the burdens of free world leadership were quickly forgotten when Hungary wanted to lose its 25 percent tariff on Goya cheese. Obey, with his Senate counterpart Robert Kasten, the ranking Republican on the Senate's foreign operations panel, cried out against the petition, insisting the U.S. dairy industry would be decimated once Goya started competing with domestic Parmesan. The State Department withdrew its support, and the petition was ultimately denied.

Obey and Kasten had plenty of help. Democratic Representative Jolene Unsoeld of Washington complained that the petition would bring "havoc and harm" to the Olympia Cheese Company, which employs 100 people in her district. Republican Senator David Durenberger of Minnesota predicted that the imports would leave 600 dairy farmers in his state without a buyer for their milk, and would drive up the U.S. government's cost of purchasing surplus dairy products by at least $100 million.

While the Great Cheese War was being waged, lawmakers from California were busy battling Hungarian wine. Two years ago Republican Representative Bill Thomas of California, who is a fierce defender of free trade and who backed the Eastern European relief measures, denounced Europe's heavily subsidized system of agricultural exports on the House floor. "Agricultural trade is the lifeblood for people across the globe," he said. "It is imperative that agricultural goods be allowed to circulate freely." All goods that is, but Hungarian wine. Duty-free imports of Hungarian wine, Thomas argued, "will do nothing but hurt the California wine industry." The Hungarian wine industry is "hundreds of years old," he said. "These are competitive industries—they do not need the added advantage of duty-free treatment." The table wine and brandy petitions were also turned down.

Likewise, in 1990 Pennsylvania Representative Richard Schulze, the ranking GOP member of the Ways and Means trade subcommittee, spoke on the House floor in favor of a bill that, among other things, extended trade benefits to Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and the former East Germany. "The sum of these changes will be beneficial to U.S. trade policy objectives, improve our competitive position in world trade, and lend our support to struggling democracies both nearby and far from our shores," he said. Yet when Hungary petitioned to eliminate tariffs on mushrooms, Schulze, the chairman of the Congressional Mushroom Caucus, fought against it. The mushroom petition was withdrawn.

Republican Representative David Nagle of Iowa, who also voted for the aid packages in '89 and '90, was so concerned that other countries would piggyback onto GSP status for a Czechoslovakian pharmaceutical called sulfasalazine, which is also produced in his district, that he convinced former ambassador Rita Klimova to have the petition withdrawn.

Chief among the arguments advanced by the lawmakers is that the petitions would vastly increase foreign imports—and not necessarily from the countries seeking help. Goya cheese, for instance, is also made in Argentina and Uruguay. But Uruguay accounts for only about 4 percent of Goya imports to the United States; and Argentina's imports likely would have been curtailed by a provision in the GSP that excludes major suppliers from tariff waivers. In fact, more than 75 percent of the requests by foreign countries for tariff relief in 1990 and 1991 were rejected by the office of the U.S. Trade Representative. Moreover, while there are more than 4,000 products under GSP, trade officials say U.S. companies typically request that only three or four products be removed from the rolls each year. As one trade expert puts it, "That tells me we do a pretty good job of not adding products that are import sensitive in the first place."

Nevertheless, Nagle intends to push a slew of changes to the GSP next year—one of which would omit agricultural goods. "It's such a loose procedure that we're not really considering the economic impact," he warns. "You can destroy an entire industry."

Most lawmakers who favored the European aid package but opposed the petitions insist there is no inconsistency in sending hundreds of millions in foreign aid or promoting free global trade while beating down a handful of trade requests. "He believes in just keeping things fair," says Thomas's spokeswoman, D.J. Berinstein. "Why should we give a country GSP preference when it's been producing wines longer and better

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than the California wine industry?" Even so, it's clear that, international considerations aside, members of Congress who lobbied to kill individual petitions were overwhelmingly motivated not by international economics, but by political self-interest. "It was the domestic dairy industry," says one Obey aide. "Our concern was definitely a consequence of what we saw as potential damage."

MELISSA ROBINSON is a Washington correspondent for Scripps League Newspapers.

An anti-jogging harrumph.

RUNNERS-UP

By Joseph Epstein

Some time ago I decided that I would vote against any politician who jogs. In the election year of 1992, as any newspaper reader knows, this rules out the candidates of our major parties, both of whom are determined, if not to say relentless, joggers.

Shots of candidates jogging is one of the hot photographic clichés of the day. Pick up a paper or newsmagazine and there is George Bush or Bill Clinton or both, about to begin a jog, on a jog, shaking hands with voters while jogging, completing a jog. (See TNR's cover this week.) President Bush has even boasted that he looks better in his jogging togs than does Governor Clinton, though I have seen no persuasive polls on the question. Clinton, *The New York Times* reports, taking the lead from Al Gore, is considering adopting a shorter running short, manfully risking the exposure of two heavy thighs. Does either man ever miss his daily jog? Apparently not, so habitually does each man give, so to speak, not only the voters but himself the run around.

A photograph of presidential jogging changed my own politics. I won't say that this photograph alone changed them, but it did push me over the line. It was a shot of then President Jimmy Carter, held up by Secret Service men after he had collapsed from heat prostration while jogging, that convinced me I could not vote for this man a second time. American hostages were in Iran, we seemed to have no real energy to stay with the cold war, there was much talk about the country suffering a spiritual malaise, and here was this poor fellow named Jimmy gone at the knees from jogging. Such heavy-handed symbolism, I felt, could not be ignored. For the first time in my life I voted for a Republican—for a non-jogging Ronald Reagan—for president.

Apart from George Bush, Jimmy Carter, so far as I know, has been the only jogging president in our history. In recent times, Dwight David Eisenhower certainly never jogged. John F. Kennedy, history records, got his aerobic exercise elsewhere. Lyndon Johnson, when at home in Texas, not only never jogged but went about in a mammoth, immensely fuel-inefficient Lincoln convertible.

Viewed historically, the very act of jogging seems entirely unpresidential. Abraham Lincoln jogging is unthinkable, though one suspects he might be humorous on the subject. Thomas Jefferson would not have jogged. Nor would any Adams. Woodrow Wilson, clearly, is a non-jogger. Teddy Roosevelt, I will allow, might have jogged. Had FDR been in good health, he certainly would not have chosen to spend it jogging.

Of world historical leaders, it is difficult to imagine Pericles doing five laps round the Agora before delivering his famous funeral oration. Napoleon, certainly, is *un non-joggeur*; so, too, Charles de Gaulle, or for that matter any other self-respecting Frenchman or serious Englishman. Fancy Churchill jogging. Margaret Thatcher? Don't ask.

Since both our presidential candidates continue to claim Harry Truman as a political forebear, perhaps they would do well to remember that Truman began his work day with a walk, not a run. Walking, a man can sort out his thoughts, think about the world; running, he can only think about himself: his lungs, his legs, his blood flow, his body. It's a very narcissistic activity, jogging. A man who has just completed a longish jog generally feels smug and overly confident, too damn good about himself generally. It's not at all what one wants a national leader to feel.

The most common defense for jogging is that it is good for the circulation, and hence the heart, and therefore extends life by improving health generally. Of course, many a jogger has pegged out on the trail, and met his maker in athletic supporter and Reeboks. But even if jogging does extend life, it has been estimated that it extends it only by the length of time that one has spent jogging—though we have not yet had a research team at Penn State report conclusively on the matter either way.

The time required for getting into jogging clothes, the actual jog itself, then showering and getting into business clothes takes at least an hour, and sometimes more. Assume a president sleeps even as few as six hours a night. This means that of the eighteen hours he is awake, he is spending at least one of them, or one-eighteenth of his waking life, jogging, generally in a circle.

Are there many others who feel that it is unseemly, wasteful, and unwise for a president of the United States to knock off a couple of hours each day merely to jog? No way of knowing if there are, but for those who feel as I do about it, in our hearts we long for a candidate who will make and stand by only one campaign promise—if elected, not to run.

JOSEPH EPSTEIN is the author most recently of *The Goldin Boys*, a collection of short stories (W. W. Norton).

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An alternative to term limits.

THE BIG HOUSE

By Michael Merrill and Sean Wilentz

As we write this, a week before the election, it seems probable that several states will pass propositions favoring congressional term limits. That will be a shame, for term limits will do little to cure what ails Congress and could easily make matters worse. (See "Over the Hill" by Sean Wilentz, TNR, October 12.) The courts may well rule such state-imposed limitations unconstitutional. Whether they do or not, however, there is a far surer, less mischievous, and wholly constitutional proposal for congressional reform: enlarging the membership of the House of Representatives.

"Enlarge the House!" is, we admit, a less thrilling battle cry than "Throw the Bums Out!" And at first glance it might seem to defy common sense. Isn't Congress already trapped in endemic inefficiency and gridlock? Aren't there, as it is, too *many* self-important, perk-drunk careerists on Capitol Hill who labor slavishly for the corporate special interests while bribing the electorate with pork? And if so, won't a bigger Congress simply bring more arrogance, more bureaucracy, and less democracy? No. Enlargement cannot guarantee good government. No reform can. But enlargement is needed to prevent things from getting worse. It will make Congress more efficient, less reliant on the work of unelected staffers, and less vulnerable to national lobbies and PACs.

At the heart of the current congressional mess is an alarming, little-known fact: with respect to representation, the U.S. House of Representatives has become the least democratic body of its kind among the major nations of the developed world. When the Framers designed the Constitution in 1787, they allowed for no more than one representative for every 30,000 inhabitants (with each slave counted as three-fifths of a person, and with all untaxed Indians excluded). This meant sending sixty-five men to the first House of Representatives. The Anti-Federalists complained that such a small ratio of representatives to residents would render the House an oligarchy, out of touch with the sentiments of the citizenry; the victorious Federalists buried these arguments with the claim (advanced by James Madison in Federalist No. 55) that the proposed House was large enough to legislate virtuously and thwart corruption.

What neither side of the Constitution debate could foresee was how rapidly the country would grow over the next two centuries. Although subsequent generations periodically increased the numbers of representatives as new states were admitted, the House has remained stuck at 435 members since the 63rd Congress, back in 1913. (The number was fixed by law at 435 in 1929.) Consequently, in 1992 each member of the House represents on average about 600,000 persons—a figure that would have staggered Madison, let alone the Anti-Federalists. The ratio looks nearly as scary when compared with today's figures for the analogous legislative bodies of Japan (1:238,600), Germany (1:120,000), France (1:96,300), and Great Britain (1:87,500).

No wonder ordinary Americans feel out of touch with Congress; and no wonder members have increasingly fallen victim to careerism and burnout. Compounding the problem has been the astounding growth in the size and power of congressional staffs. Between 1929 and the late 1980s, the numbers of personal, committee, and leadership staff members rose more than tenfold. The figure dropped slightly at the very end of the 1980s. Still, in 1989 there was a grand total of 11,187 House staffers, an average of nearly twenty-six staffers per elected member. Overburdened by the demands of legislative business, constituent service, and fund-raising for the next election, members have delegated much of the work they were elected to do to their hirelings, further weakening accountable representative government and heightening congressional cynicism and public alienation.

As Michael Lind (a fellow Enlarger) has pointed out, it would be difficult to return immediately to the Framers' original ratio, which would create a body of more than 8,000 members—under current conditions, a congressional circus. Yet we might easily return to 1929 as a baseline. Since that year, the American population has roughly doubled. Let us therefore consider doubling the House to 870 members. As an all-important corollary, let the overall outlay for congressional staffs be frozen. This would raise the American ratio of members to constituents to 1:300,000—still low, but a big step toward making Congress more representative. It would also leave each member with half the staff he or she currently employs, to match their diminished individual responsibilities.

For citizens, the new, smaller congressional districts would encourage greater political intimacy at the local level, counteract the trend toward expensive, media-driven politics, make members more directly accountable (shorn of their large, protective staffs), and thus curtail the advantages of incumbency without punishing worthy representatives (as term limits would do). The new districts would also bring politics more closely in line with the life of actual communities and promote genuinely democratic social and intellectual diversity among candidates and elected officials.

Enlargement would do even more to improve the functioning of Congress. Smaller districts would reduce the crushing load of constituent service for each member, encourage less expensive campaigns, and mitigate the distracting and corrupting pursuit of PAC financing. Doubling the membership would make life all the more difficult (and costly) for special interests that lack a significant popular base among the citizenry. In the new

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Congress, it would be harder for individual members to vie for the plum committee assignments that, under the current regime, have become the foundations for personal fiefdoms and a lure for monied lobbyists. By thus removing some of the opportunities for personal careerism, enlargement would help channel congressional ambitions and individual self-interest toward effective deliberation and legislation on national issues.

A House of 870 members would at first be more cumbersome, although it would remain of an order of magnitude similar to that of national legislatures elsewhere. (There are 651 M.P.s in the British House of Commons; Germany's Bundestag has 662 members.) This very awkwardness, however, should encourage yet another benefit: in addition to being more accountable to the voters, members of an enlarged Congress would be more dependent on effective party organizations to carry the day. The combination would work to establish issues rather than personalities as the dominant focus of our political life.

Enlargement is not a panacea. Its success would depend on mastering some difficult and crucial details. But its logic runs entirely to the good, with none of the drawbacks of term limitation. It is an eminently conservative reform, returning Congress to the pre-New Deal representative ratio of 1929 without resorting to constitutional tampering. And it wisely approaches Congress's problems in the spirit once proclaimed by Andrew Jackson as the essence of American reform: that the best cure for democracy's ills is more democracy.

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P. C. organ transplants.

MONKEY BUSINESS

By Christopher Anderson

Two months ago in Pittsburgh, a 35-year-old man died with the AIDS virus in his veins and a baboon liver in his gut. His death was no surprise. One of his conditions was invariably lethal; the other—the result of an experimental cross-species organ transplant—was uncharted medical territory. His doctors haven't yet revealed which actually killed him, but in a sense it doesn't matter. Either would have likely done so soon enough.

The University of Pittsburgh Medical Center, whose surgeons performed the operation and where the patient, still unidentified, died seventy-one days later, nevertheless declared the procedure a historic success. Headlines around the world hailed the operation as a crucial step toward freeing patients from the crippling shortage of human organs. And the lead surgeon, Thomas Starzl, has received permission from his hospital review board to perform at least three more baboon organ transplants.

But the disclosure that the patient was infected with the AIDS virus—a fact that the medical center refused to confirm until hospital staff leaked it to the press after the patient died—has cast a shadow over the procedure. The Pittsburgh hospital defended the use of such a patient by citing its "non-discrimination" policy, which prohibits it from excluding candidates on the basis of their HIV status. And the Pittsburgh surgeons say that the patient did not have AIDS symptoms, at least not as defined by the Centers for Disease Control.

Yet the CDC definition is notoriously narrow. It is possible to be quite sick with HIV without officially having AIDS. Pittsburgh has released no other details on the patient's pretransplant condition except to say he had Hepatitis-B, which had ruined his liver and made him a candidate for an organ transplant in the first place. Because the disease would likely attack a new human organ as well, the doctors used a liver from a baboon, which is thought not to be susceptible to the Hepatitis-B virus.

Rumors, however, persist among hospital staff that the patient did have some AIDS-related symptoms, something that, if true, would change the ethics of the experiment considerably. If the patient's immune system was already weakened by HIV, it would be less likely to reject the organ. The patient would die in a few months, but for a while the experiment might look like a success.

Starzl already has a reputation as a cowboy within the transplant community. He proposes risky experimental transplants that other surgeons won't touch. This kind of medicine has paid off for him: Starzl is the sixth-most-prolific scientist in the world (his name appears on about one research article a week). Both ACT-UP and animal rights groups have protested the Pittsburgh transplant. Until Starzl publishes his findings (he promises an article in the British medical journal *The Lancet* soon), questions about the baboon liver patient will remain.

In defending its use of an HIV-positive patient for the transplant, Pittsburgh noted that it has already done more than twenty-five human-to-human transplants on such patients. In fact, at least 250 such patients are known to have received human organs to date, mostly at U.S. hospitals. Like Pittsburgh, most of the other U.S. institutions maintain a non-discrimination transplant policy. Although they won't transplant organs into patients with full-blown AIDS, they do not otherwise take HIV status into consideration when selecting transplant candidates.

Perhaps they should. Even a cursory investigation of the scientific literature shows that there are plenty of reasons to conclude that HIV-positive patients are poor

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candidates for organ transplants of any kind. Pittsburgh's own studies show that liver recipients with HIV have at least a 15 percent greater chance of dying within five years of the operation than non-HIV patients, mostly because the immune-system suppressing drugs that they are given to prevent rejection of the foreign organ tend also to trigger the onset of full-blown AIDS. Others rate the odds even higher. Robert Rubin, chief of infectious disease for transplantation at Massachusetts General Hospital, says that about one-third of HIV-positive transplant patients typically die of unusual or unexpected infections within six months of their operations. Another third tend to begin to develop AIDS-related opportunistic infections about three years after the transplant. Only the remaining third are typically symptom-free after five years, and they still face the foreshortened life span of anyone with HIV.

Meanwhile more than 27,000 seriously ill Americans are on the waiting list for various organs. With long-term survival rates in HIV-free patients at about 90 percent for kidney transplants and 75 percent for livers, organ transplants are no longer considered experimental, or even particularly radical, therapy. And the more accepted transplants become, the more demand there is for the tiny pool of available organs. Each year some 2,000 die without receiving a transplant, because the success and acceptance of the operations have left a vast undersupply of suitable organs.

Yet the success of the AIDS lobby in fighting all restrictions on equal access to health care for HIV-positive patients has prevented any re-examination of the non-discrimination transplant policy. Privately some AIDS activists say that transplants for HIV-positive patients are a poor use of limited health care dollars, if not an outright mistake. They would rather see a national vaccination program to prevent Hepatitis-B (which shares many of the risk factors of HIV) than a few experimental transplants for those who are already dying from the disease.

Publicly, however, they continue to argue for equal transplant access. "Activists are worried that to suggest that people with HIV aren't the best candidates for organ transplants just gives ammunition to the people who don't want people with AIDS to get any treatment at all," says Don Fox of the Pittsburgh chapter of ACT-UP. Even Fox's protest of the baboon transplant launched an internecine battle between activists who objected to what they saw as the exploitation of an HIV-positive patient in a radical experiment and those who say that "overprotecting" such patients will deprive them of potentially promising therapies. In the end, Fox lost. Groups such as the New York-based Gay Men's Health Crisis continue to support transplants—even cross-species experiments—for HIV-positive patients.

This sort of refusal to abandon principles, no matter how absurd their implications, can have bizarre consequences. A classic example is the current situation at the congressionally mandated United Network for Organ Sharing in Richmond, Virginia, which maintains the national waiting list for available organs.

When an organ becomes available, the UNOS computer assigns people on its list a score based on their geographic location, whether their tissue and blood types match those of the organ, how long they have been on the waiting list, and how sick they are. But one implication of UNOS's congressional charter is that it cannot take HIV status into consideration in this ranking. That means that a patient with full-blown AIDS can actually get a *higher* score than an AIDS-free candidate. The likelihood that he will die within the year cannot enter into the decision.

UNOS says it must rely on the judgment of doctors not to put patients with AIDS on the list in the first place. But explaining to a dying patient that there are others more deserving of organs is not an easy thing to do. UNOS does not keep records on how many HIV-positive or AIDS patients have actually made it onto its list.

With AIDS politics overshadowing the issue, an easy resolution of the HIV transplant conundrum seems unlikely. In fact, many transplant surgeons are resigned simply to waiting for the problem to go away. Most of the HIV-positive transplant candidates have been people with chronic organ failure who contracted the virus through tainted blood transfusions or dialysis. HIV blood screening now prevents almost all of these infections, and the number of HIV-positive transplant candidates is declining. But there are still hundreds waiting for organs. Some HIV carriers may indeed be good transplant candidates for new organs, but until doctors are allowed to make real-world decisions free of political sensitivities, the risk of wasting both the organs and the lives of those who could not get them remains all too real.

CHRISTOPHER ANDERSON is the Washington correspondent for *Nature.*

The last of the Bohicans.

BROTHER RAY

By Sidney Blumenthal

Was it an accident that Jim Garrison, the former New Orleans district attorney who vainly hunted down the assassins of JFK, died on the Wednesday before the Sunday on which Ross Perot was gunned down on "60 Minutes"? You decide. It is no stranger than Black Panther assassins invading from Canada, on orders from Hanoi, scaling the wall around Perot's home; or computer-altered images of his daughter as a wanton sapphist; or even days-of-rage

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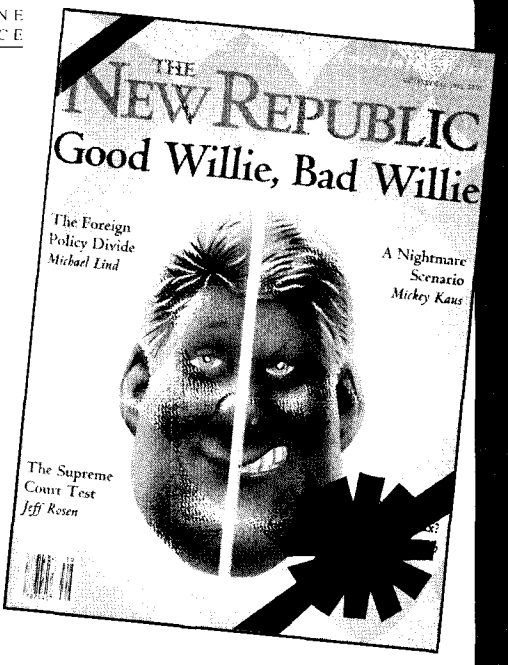

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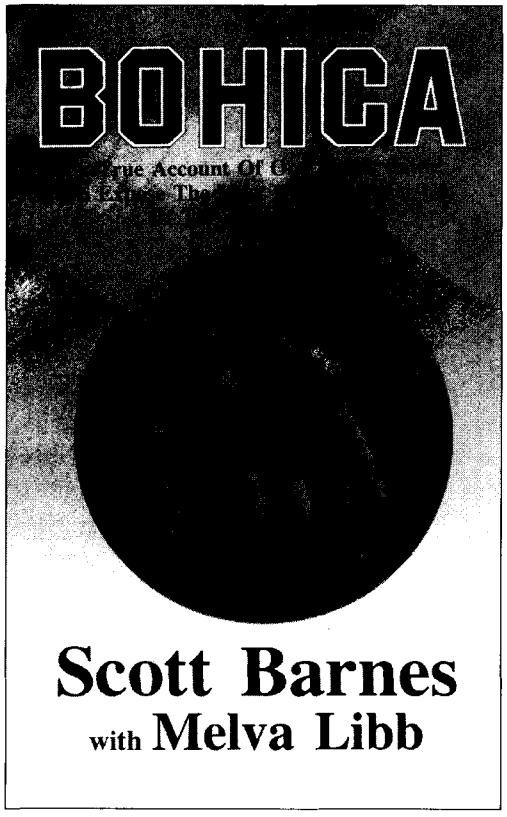
Republican wedding planners. No one—perhaps not even his wife, who didn't know he was going to run for president until she heard it on "Larry King Live"—really knows when Perot first became obsessed with conspiracies to assassinate him or plots to discredit him. But he has been recounting them for years, with all the fervor of the super-sales pitch that he once used to sell spare computer time.

Any rational person could have predicted that Perot might self-destruct if he fell out of the cocoon of his infomercial world, where he wrapped himself in warm testimonials from his children and girded himself with his beloved, homemade charts. He had, after all, self-destructed many times in the past (protected from splatting on the sidewalk by the soft cushion of his dough). The most recent occurrence took place in July, when he unceremoniously departed from the race, abandoning his staff and adoring volunteers.

Perot's world is entirely self-referential, and he had a compulsion to make the presidential campaign an ultimate reflection of his hall of mirrors. When he quit, he denied, in an interview with *Newsweek* editor Maynard Parker, that his family had anything to do with his motive. "No," he said, "the family isn't the story. Did you see Clinton's daughter last night? It scares me to death what we do to these kids of our presidents. Look at LBJ's daughters, look at Amy Carter. We print any rumors, any stories about them. It's really very tough on them. It comes close to destroying them." Parker pressed the point about whether concern about his family was a reason to pull out. "No," Perot insisted, "when I got involved with the POWs the Vietnamese would put contracts out on [my life] in Canada. They learned to live with that. No, I just wanted to do the right thing for the country." With that, he set the record straight.



COVER OF SCOTT BARNES'S *BOHICA*

To erase the taint of being "the quitter," stuck on him after his early leaving, he got back in the race. After dispensing with the formality of pretending his motive was deep concern over the deficit, he was ready to reshape the initial disfiguring assessment. Since August he had been peddling to various news organizations the tangled conspiracy tale divulged on "60 Minutes." They could prove none of it and therefore aired nothing. In the meantime, when the frontmen for the conspiracy, the Bush campaign representatives, came to pay him homage in Dallas before his re-entry, he threw his arm around a startled Bob Teeter, the manager. Perot was coming back with the all-confident aura of the grifter, waiting for the final con, which would be the upstaging of the president, whom he loathed.

"60 Minutes" seemed to be the aggressive journalistic investigators uncovering his paranoia. But from his point of view, the program served as the host of his latest reincarnation, which was the victimized father of the bride, willing to sacrifice his candidacy and even the people's trust in him to make his littlest girl's biggest day have a happy ending. He wasn't revealing himself as a deranged paranoid, but reclaiming the mantle of the righteous candidate, who merits trust more than ever, once his true motive is understood. This motive, he has explained at last, is not that the House of Representatives will be deadlocked over choosing the next president.

Before his re-entry, Perot laid out the conspiracy "in technicolor," as he said later, at two meetings with James Baker at his home in Washington. Perot and Baker are men consumed with control. The former secretary of state, from old Texas money, must have thought the upstart tycoon insane, but he was desperate. Bush was frozen into his unfavorability ratings; nothing he could do on his own would melt the ice. After Baker's economic speech produced no uplift, Bush was condemned to dependence on the vagaries of Perot's ability to pull voters away from Clinton. Thus Baker framed a balance-of-power politics. Putting Perot on the platform with Clinton and Bush in the debates might work to Bush's advantage, not necessarily because it would make Bush look good by comparison, but because it would give people another place to park their unhappiness. Baker's goal had to be the parceling of discontent. It would have been beyond the call of duty for him to have alerted the country that a certifiable paranoid was about to prowl among innocent voters.

But it was a reasonable surmise to wonder when Perot's paranoia would snap. There was no way for Baker to know when Perot would suddenly roll away his facade to expose the grassy knoll of his mind. Baker may have thought that no functional man would act on fantasies like Perot's, in part because Baker may have projected the universality of his bloodless calculation about winning. Or he may simply have had no choice but to gamble.

Perot's personality, as we saw in his first incarnation as a candidate, tends to overwhelm the idealized image for which he craves adulation. His pattern, like a faulty com-

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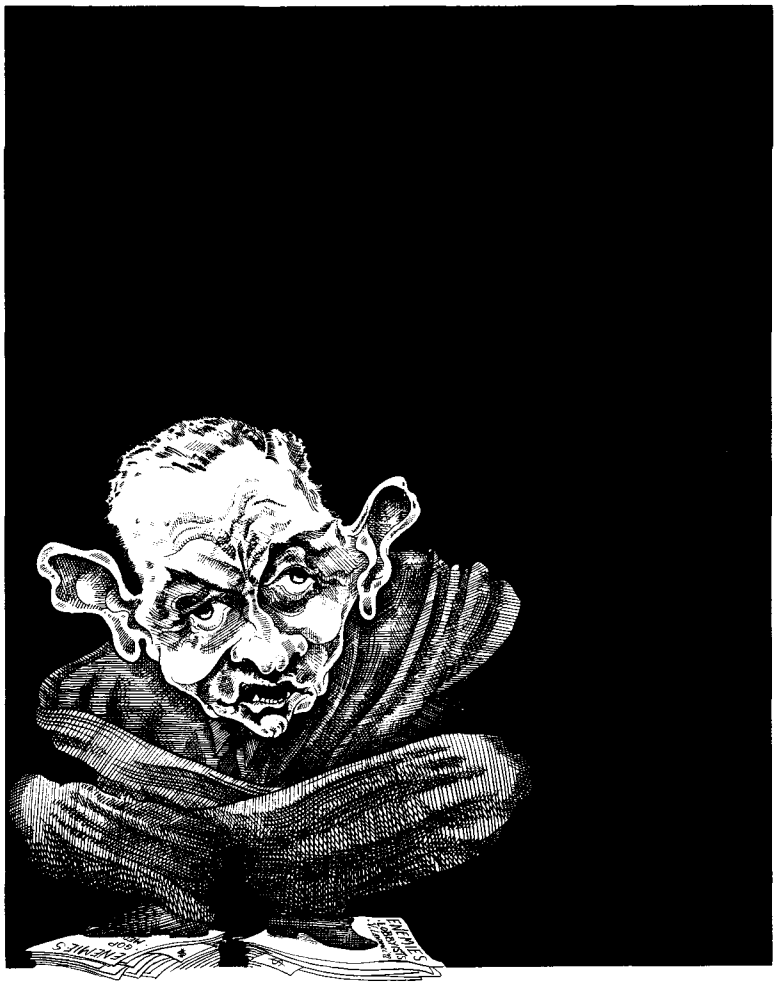
puter program, is almost endlessly redundant. Among the more creative theories explaining Perot's behavior has been one advanced by Lawrence Wright, a Texas writer, in his biographical study of Perot in *The New York Times Magazine*. Ross Perot, as it happens, was not born Ross Perot. His parents' first son, Ross Jr., died at the age of 2. Grief-stricken, they had another child soon afterward, whom they named Ray, a name close to Ross, but not quite Ross. Ross Sr., according to Ray, never really recovered from the loss of his namesake. At the age of 32, Ray legally changed his name to Ross. "To deliver his father from the burden of grief," writes Wright, "Perot transformed himself into the perfect son, the family savior. From then on, rescuing people would be a recurrent theme in his life." In the "replacement child syndrome," as psychologists call it, it is common for the living sibling to feel subconsciously that his parents may even want him dead because of his inadequacy as a substitute. Of course, it would be mercilessly reductionist to adduce everything from this syndrome, but one cannot dismiss it out of hand. At the very least, it provides an explanation for Perot's perpetual sense of being embattled, his excessive fear of exposure and rejection, his worry that forces beyond his powers are out to destroy his fragile shell.



DRAWING BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

After his early enormous success, Perot lived his fantasies in splendid megalomaniacal style. His increasing arrogance led to decreased success—indeed, failure upon failure—masked by his overall portfolio. Yet his belief in his infallibility seemed to expand, an answer to fear of humiliation from a host of enemies. His fortune could buy him a lot of compensation, but apparently $3.5 billion couldn't buy enough. So he ran for president.

Perot invariably idealizes institutions that fail to live up to his ideals, from the Navy to General Motors. His own candidacy became the latest in a long line of disillusionments. His campaign was not really a campaign, but an empty box, with no concentric circles of power in it or around it—just him and those who treat him as his ideal self, ornaments to his wishful identity. His idea of power was painfully stunted, and his feeble dictatorship could not withstand the rigors and ambiguities of democratic give-and-take. He shriveled at the slightest exposure to sunlight.

Perot's addiction to conspiracies now made him especially susceptible to Scott Barnes, one of many who have filled his ears with their delusions over the years. Perot has been like a MacArthur Foundation for conspiracy-spinners, disbursing "grants" with special attention to POW bounty hunters, drug warriors, and, recently, haters of conspiracy-kingpin George Bush. Barnes is a self-proclaimed hero as confidence man—a man of numerous false identities, false stories, and POW sightings. *Soldier of Fortune* magazine, not exactly a standard-bearer of propriety, ran an article about him titled, "Scott Barnes: My Favorite Flake." The National League of Families of American Prisoners and Missing in Southeast Asia issued a pamphlet warning against his "fantasies." Barnes is the author of a vanity press book, *BOHICA* (an acronym for Bend Over Here It Comes Again), which details his adventures locating POWs, then being ordered by the CIA to kill them because their existence would blow the cover of a massive drug and gun-running conspiracy.

I interviewed Barnes many times, beginning last June, about his relationship with Perot, which he claimed was initiated by the billionaire after he heard through the POW hunter grapevine about Barnes's exploits. "I didn't believe who the call was so I hung up," Barnes told me. "He just wanted to know more about the mission and the death of one of the participants. Shortly thereafter I got a call from George Bush's office to keep my mouth shut, not to talk to 'Mr. Big Man' in Texas." Since then, Barnes said, he and Perot have regularly discussed the POW-CIA-drugs-Bush nexus: "He's been pursuing it for years." And Perot confided in him, Barnes claimed, about his fear of assassination. "He's going to be the next president if he's not assassi-

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nated," Barnes told me. "It's a deep concern of his."

When Barnes approached Perot this summer with his most recent batch of conspiracies, he was giving the gift of the all-encompassing explanation for Perot's demise as a candidate. For the self-destructive anti-politician, Barnes's tales were perfectly suited to rationalize the crisis Perot faced. At the center of the conspiracy was a family under siege that must be rescued. Perot's privacy was being invaded in order to humiliate him. Casting his daughter as a lesbian was an attack on his own sexual integrity. (Homophobia is among his main recurring themes.) The telltale photograph, moreover, is a feature in many of his conspiracy-dramaturgies—from his crusades against a Pentagon official with a Vietnamese girlfriend to a female *Fort Worth Telegram* reporter in a "compromising" position—all of which seem to have lurid sexual subtexts for him. And the Frankenstein-like notion that computers would be turned against him added to the conspiracy's dread. Thus the irresistible appeal for Perot.

But after his re-entry, the lush jungle of his imagination was hidden from view, except for a few signifying fronds. Once again, he was taken seriously as a contender. Bush and Clinton leveled barrages at each other, but not at him; and the press, in the belief that the Perot story had already been rehearsed, reported dutifully on his campaign as though it were a matter of empirical coverage. In the week after the debates, the contest became jittery. Clinton's margins in the states were holding firm, but his national standing had dropped by about 5 points. Bush was holding steady at the lower end of thirtysomething, the cement still drying around his feet. But Perot jumped to 20 points, and his favorability rating radically reversed. According to a CNN poll, it had astronomically risen to 56 percent, higher than either of his opponents. Perhaps the Perot factor might jumble the campaign after all. Then it was Sunday night—"60 Minutes"—followed by Monday morning—the press conference mad scene.

Perot made it patently clear that providing proof of Republican "dirty tricks" was not anything he was interested in, which made him either a liar or a pathological liar. The concerned father had managed to save his daughter the embarrassment of being accused of being a lesbian by broadcasting the charge everywhere himself. His real obsession was the restoration of his own reputation by providing a new rationale for dropping out. And his tens of millions—twice the sum of the other candidates combined—flowed to sustain his followers in their suspension of disbelief.

Perot's former press secretary, James Squires (still on his payroll), undoubtedly trying to help him out of the jam, admitted that another incident was also important in Perot's consideration in abruptly leaving the contest: his fear that details of his investigation of a former boyfriend of his daughter Nancy would be revealed. (The incident was reported in TNR in the July 6 and October 19 issues.) It was this daughter to whom Perot referred in his infomercial aired on October 23: "Nancy is my mother"—a remark that is Oedipal cubed. With all this, the questions about him reverberated down the long hall of rattling mirrors.

Who shot H.R.? He was predestined to live in a shadow he wished both to inhabit and to escape. The momentum of his personality drove the momentum of his campaign. In the rushing currents of the moment, riding low and then high, he thrashed for control and fell through his brittle veneer. The deep insecurities, which can be traced back to childhood anxieties, stalked him again. The homespun kitsch, the easy companionship of Larry King, the $60 million of packaged wit and wisdom—none of these could protect him from the lurking assassin. Just as he was being accepted again as a legitimate political figure, he was ambushed. It was the final exit of a single bullet that had riddled his career. Ray Perot had struck down Ross Perot. •

The Palestinians and peace.

GET REAL

By Edward Luttwak

From the way Palestinian leaders of all stripes have been negotiating in Washington, deliberating in Tunis, and agitating in the West Bank and Gaza, one can only conclude that for them "the balance of power" is merely an empty phrase coined by some long-dead Italian. They act as if the Palestinians alone of all nations in conflict will somehow be awarded all of what they want rather than having to negotiate for the best compromise deal they can get.

Of course, disunity always finds its easiest compromise in bombast and extremism. The Palestinians are badly divided geographically, with inside leaders living under occupation and outside leaders living in Tunis, when not in transit between five-star hotels. And they are politically divided, between Arafat's Fatah and all its rivals within or outside the PLO, including the Islamic maximalists. But even Palestinian leaders of clearly moderate temper seem unable to accept the universal mechanics of diplomacy, in which negotiated settlements can only be shaped by each side's leverage on the other after all one-sided pretensions have been abandoned.

Ever since the Rabin government was formed, its spokesmen and negotiators have offered "autonomy" to the Palestinian side. That is a vague concept in itself, whose concrete meaning can only be defined by detailed bargaining between the two sides: Who will be responsible for what highways? How large a Palestinian police force will there be? How will scarce water resources be managed? And so on. But there has been no such bargaining in the Washington peace talks so

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far. Unwilling or unable to negotiate in earnest, the Palestinians have preferred to bracket the Israeli offer with an upside demand for total independence in all the contested territories and a downside campaign of new intifada agitations.

Evidently, the Palestinians want autonomy to be a short bridge to full independence. The Israelis, on the other hand, view autonomy as a laboratory in which the Palestinians will (or will not) prove that they can keep the peace among themselves and with Israel to make further progress in self-government. Clearly, either of these visions of autonomy could be right in some abstract sense. But what counts in the peace talks is each side's power to impose elements of its own vision. In that sense, the Palestinians are unreasonable simply because they refuse to recognize the reality of their relative weakness.

Yitzhak Rabin's government, unlike Yitzhak Shamir's, is not determined to keep the West Bank and Gaza indefinitely while only pretending to negotiate in order to mollify the Americans. The new government's urgent intention is to abolish the occupation altogether, and it cannot afford to expend much more political capital to further improve conditions on the ground (many prisoners have been released, many restrictions have been lifted, many roadblocks have been removed). In a climate of insecurity, hard-liners can all too easily gain public support by opposing liberalization measures. Hence the latest round of PLO-sponsored intifada mass demonstrations amounts to a most peculiar inversion: a movement whose original purpose was to "shake off" the occupation status quo now serves to reinforce it; a movement that started because there were no peace talks in progress to sustain even distant hopes is now being manipulated to evade serious negotiations that could yield quick results.

Rabin's coalition government is also subject to a domestic balance of power measured very precisely, vote by vote, in the Knesset. By now expert observers of the Israeli political scene, the Palestinians must know that the Rabin government has the votes to replace Israeli rule in the West Bank and Gaza with some form of Palestinian autonomy, as well as to give up land on the Golan Heights in negotiating with the Syrians (no such territories are in dispute with Lebanon or Jordan). The Palestinians must also know that Rabin or indeed any Israeli government could not possibly gather enough Knesset votes to sanction the transfer of the West Bank and Gaza to an independent Palestinian state. As in any parliamentarian system, Israel's government is formed by whatever coalition can command a majority of the votes. Should the Labor Party violate its unambiguous election pledges on the issue of Palestinian independence, it not only would drive most other parties into the arms of the Likud, it would also probably suffer a number of defections among its own Knesset members. Thus if the Rabin government were to agree to surrender the West Bank and Gaza at the negotiating table, the outcome would not be an independent Palestinian state headed by Yasir Arafat, but rather a new Israeli government headed by Shamir or whoever succeeds him as head of the Likud.

Given that for the Palestinians living under the occupation virtually any form of autonomy worthy of the name must be greatly preferable to the status quo, and that for all Palestinians autonomy would offer immediate advantages without precluding progress in self-government, what is one to make of their leaders' refusal to negotiate? Their extreme disunity at this particular time explains much, but not everything. For there is a woeful continuity in the Palestinian record of "never missing an opportunity to miss an opportunity"—Abba Eban's old jibe. After all, most national movements have had their willfully unrealistic radicals, but hardly any have allowed them a perpetual ascendancy that, decade after decade, blocked all progress to achievable goals. The clue to this deeper problem is that even Palestinian negotiators who are far from radical seem convinced that they can ignore not only the domestic political balance within Israel, but also the overall Palestinian balance of power *with* Israel, to rely instead on the intervention of some greater force to nullify that unfavorable reckoning.

So long as the Soviet Union existed, there was at least a theoretical basis for that calculation—even though its rulers never in practice showed the slightest interest in the Palestinians, except as useful instruments for assorted troublemaking. Still, especially optimistic Palestinians could hope that in the future, perhaps in the setting of some wider crisis, the Soviet Union for its own reasons would find ways of inducing the United States to impose a settlement, which an uncharacteristically compliant Israel would somehow be forced to accept. Always a fanciful scenario, it is now simply impossible. In world politics there is at present no greater force ready to exempt the Palestinians from the balance of power. But one would never know it from the conduct of the PLO's diplomacy, so passive in the Washington peace talks, so active elsewhere, from Europe to the Far East, with a steady stream of papal audiences, joint communiqués issued in such places as Havana and Pyongyang, formal demarches by PLO representatives at every opportunity, and Arafat "official" visits as president of the notional state of Palestine—all futile exercises in protocol and formality reminiscent of Venetian diplomacy in its final decadence.

For the minority of Israelis who want to keep all of the West Bank and Gaza, the Palestinian avoidance of serious negotiations is reassuring. But for the large number of Israelis who would much prefer tranquillity, the ancient rule applies: greatly to be desired in war, a foolish antagonist is a great misfortune when diplomacy begins. As for the United States, this is one segment of foreign policy that no change in administrations can affect, for no U.S. government under Bush-Baker, Perot, or Clinton can reward a refusal to negotiate that amounts to a refusal of reality.

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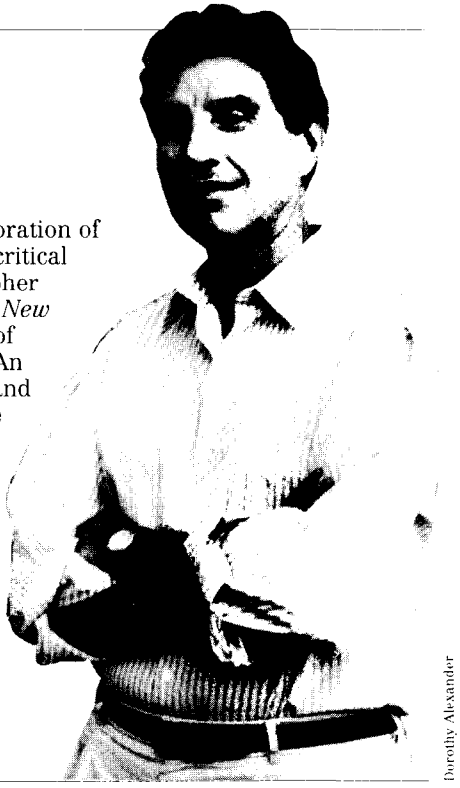

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Bush's green screwup.

BLACK THUMBS

By Gregg Easterbrook

Hasn't anyone noticed that George Bush's poll numbers began to dive in late May, during the buildup to the Earth Summit? That was when he began a calculated attempt to sneer at environmental regulation: snapping and snarling about global warming, the Endangered Species Act, fuel efficiency, and other matters. Of course Bush's sudden anti-green attitude was not the primary factor in his declining popularity; the economy weighs much more heavily on the public mind. But the unveiling of an unvironmental president seems to have supported one of voters' worst fears about Bush—that he is out of touch with common American concerns.

The anti-environmental presidency was orchestrated by administration insiders who have specialized in being out of touch—Vice President Dan Quayle, the short-lived domestic policy "czar" Clayton Yeutter, domestic Council of Economic Advisers chairman Michael Boskin, and most of all OMB chief Richard Darman. Pundits may one day cite the White House self-destruct on the environment as the perfect metaphor for Bush's administration: afraid of its genuine accomplishments, perversely pandering to the lowest common denominator of the right wing, satisfying no one.

"Remember, there has never been an environmental regulation that has not hurt the economy," Darman is said to have told Bush during final preparations for the 1991 G7 summit in London, at which several Western leaders wanted to talk green talk. Few if any credentialed economists endorse this view. But Darman has a deep personal investment in anti-environmental rhetoric, which he has advanced with increasing insistence within the White House. Darman detests ecological thinking generally. He considers professional enviros to be con artists interested mainly in publicity and fund-raising, and those Republican leaders who make green guilt gestures to be squish-heads incapable of maintaining their convictions. A key squish-head in Darman's universe is rival James Baker, a moderate convert to environmental protection partly because other governments have been bending his ear about the issue for four years.

From early in the administration, Darman has been animated with antipathy toward EPA administrator William Reilly. Reilly has Bush's personal affection and protected status with the media; Darman has neither. Darman repeatedly told Bush that Reilly's first major initiative, the 1990 Clean Air Act, would be an incredible blunder. Reilly prevailed, the act became a sweeping reform, and Darman lost several notches of corridor reputation around Washington.

As the economic slump has progressed, Darman is said to have told Bush with increasing conviction that environmental strictures are a primary cause of the recession. This view, too, is not shared by any important economist. For example, although Darman and his allies go on and on about how the Endangered Species Act is strangling economic development, no major academic theorist has supported this notion with research.

But Darman is the president's chief economic adviser. He evidently hoped that if he could persuade Bush to turn anti-environmental, he would both divert blame from his own economic advice and set Reilly up as the fall guy. Through 1991 most Bush advisers ignored Darman's analysis. But by winter 1992, with the November lock unlocking, the White House became susceptible. Darman's ideas began to catch on.

Darman began pushing the president to back Quayle's bid to rewrite wetland regulations in a way that would open millions of protected acres to development. The "no net loss of wetlands" assertion was among Bush's few specific campaign promises of 1988. "That was just in a speech, it doesn't really count as a promise," Darman said at one meeting. Pointing to OMB deputy director Robert Grady, Darman added, "He put it in there, he got us into this mess."

Grady has been the green world's White House mole, protecting environmental initiatives even as he has managed to stay on as Darman's No. 2 (by virtue of being a deficit hawk). Grady's political education came as an assistant to Republican Governor Thomas Kean of New Jersey, at a time when New Jersey could not attract business investment without environmental cleanup. This taught Grady that pollution control is good for business, a view now accepted by many top CEOs, who see good environmental records as relatively cheap ways to earn a competitive advantage in the global marketplace. Grady also understands that almost everyone from the boomer age group approves of conservation. He was horrified by the idea of an anti-environmental campaign transformation but, lacking Darman's regular contact with the president, was unable to get his objections to register.

Around May, according to administration officials, Darman persuaded Bush that an offensive against greenery would win the president new support. This reveals breathtaking detachment from public opinion. Polls consistently show that 70 percent to 80 percent of Americans now call themselves "environmentalists," and though some of that sentiment is shallow, polls show strong across-the-board negative reactions to anti-environmental snarling. This is true if only for self-centered reasons—at most a tiny percentage of voters have had their jobs affected by environmental regulation, but nearly all have encountered pollution and

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been disgusted by it. The strategy was bound to make the president seem an idiot, and did.

In the weeks leading up to Rio, Darman became almost maniacal about environmentalist influence. "Darman thought the global warming treaty was the Clean Air Act for the world; the biodiversity treaty was the Endangered Species Act for the world. He was so bent out of shape about the biodiversity treaty he couldn't see straight," said an informed observer (not Grady). There were valid reasons for White House trepidation about these treaties in their original forms (see "Rio-Con," TNR, July 6). Darman, however, saw Rio as a chance not to fix flawed treaties, but to deliver a stinging setback to the green movement. Thus when it turned out that U.S. negotiators pulled a coup by making the final global warming agreement better than the original U.N. version, Darman was angry. Offended by the idea that any greenhouse restrictions could be a good development, the Darman faction endlessly talked down this breakthrough. Similarly, Bush's actions on the biodiversity treaty—which forced renewed negotiations—may prevent it from becoming an ineffective muddle like its antecedent, the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species. But the Darman faction hated the notion of biodiversity progress so much that it created the false impression that Bush killed the treaty, a perception that now harms the president politically.

Needless to say, Darman could not have undone Bush's environmental image without accomplices. One was CEA head Boskin. Boskin has the same blame-shifting incentive as Darman—anything to divert attention from his own economic advice. As the recession has lingered, Boskin has had increasing difficulty getting the president's attention. This year he became an anti-environmentalist if only to keep open a channel to the Oval Office, through Darman.

Another culprit is Yeutter. He behaved as though his portfolio called not for charting a new domestic policy vision, but for settling scores for various factions and parceling handouts to the favored—which is how the Agriculture Department, whence Yeutter came, conducts its business. Yeutter was USDA chief during negotiations over the 1990 farm bill, to which environmentalists attached a few mild conservation provisions. These inflamed farmers, who are accustomed to doing as they please both with their land and public payments. They blamed Yeutter. Yeutter, who never objected to Darman's anti-environmental strategy, seemed to feel his chance had come to take revenge on the enviros.

While Darman, Boskin, Quayle, and Yeutter were doing their best to isolate Reilly, they even intrigued against the high-minded Michael Deland, head of Bush's Council on Environmental Quality. Deland is a lifelong Republican and a true believer in conservation. As the EPA regional administrator for New England in the 1980s, he made John Sununu hopping mad by enforcing wetlands regulations when Sununu wanted waivers for New Hampshire development projects. Waivers from Republican appointees to Republican governors were then automatic. Deland carried much of the fight against Quayle's wetlands proposal. He repeatedly offered to defend Bush's Rio positions, but was never accorded a White House forum sufficient to give his explanations force. A measure of Darman's retrograde influence in this area is that he stopped Bush from making Deland an effective point man on Rio.

Then there is Quayle's Council on Competitiveness, which has regulatory review powers. Many Washington reporters have suggested there is something nefarious about the very existence of the council. There isn't. Watching for silly or overly costly regulations is a good idea, and other presidents, including Jimmy Carter, have had committees with this assignment. The problem is not so much what the council does, but what it pretends to do. Its two directors, Allan Hubbard and David McIntosh, are anti-green fanatics who delight in talk of exposing the enviro con artists. This boasting ends up being treated by the press as a fact, since few reporters do more than glance at the actual output of the EPA regulatory machine. For instance the Competitiveness Council has not succeeded, as Al Gore has charged, in "gutting" the Clean Air Act. But Hubbard and McIntosh would have you believe it has.

Bush can take credit for a number of environmental achievements, including the Clean Air Act, which will nearly eliminate smog and toxic air emissions while halving acid rain; the abolition of CFCs by the year 1995; moratoriums on most offshore oil exploration; the end of ocean dumping of sludge; an import ban on tuna caught in the type of nets that kill dolphins; measures to create markets for alternative fuels and renewable power; new drinking water quality standards; acceleration of the Superfund program; the start of the nuclear weapons complex cleanup; the *Exxon Valdez* cleanup, which worked; the Rio global warming treaty; an agreement that stops most First World exports of toxic waste to the Third World; the closing of hundreds of unsafe landfills; and many lesser, technical milestones. This is easily the most impressive record of any president since the birth of the environmental movement with the 1962 publication of *Silent Spring*, and certainly more than Carter accomplished in the four years of his presidency.

But though Bush will someday be judged on the right side of history regarding environmentalism, he is on the wrong side of the present. When I vote for Clinton on November 3, one reason will be that although Bush did well by the environment in his first four years, he seems determined to convince the nation he will do poorly in his second. As in so many areas, he lacks the conviction to defend his genuine achievements and feels it is politically expedient to denigrate them now. Of course, it may really be Darman, not Bush, who is speaking. But that's even worse.

GREGG EASTERBROOK is a contributing editor of *The Atlantic* and *Newsweek*.

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BOOKS & The Arts

Stanley Kauffmann on Films

Fall Round-Up

Deadly Currents (Alliance). One theme recurs in films about Israel, fiction or documentary, made by Israelis or others. Not just the Arab-Israeli conflict, which we might expect, but the weight given to the Arab side of the conflict. Now Simcha Jacobovici, born in Israel but raised in Canada, gives us his documentary, which once again takes us from Square One in this dilemma, listening to all voices, and leads, with scrupulousness, to the same bleak impasse.

Israeli soldiers, intellectuals, and artists express a variety of opinions about the conflict, from intransigency to a sense of eventual debacle. The equivalent Arabs are more uniformly intransigent—though not unanimous—possibly because of the bloody fate of Palestinians who are suspected of collaboration with Israel. Indeed, the most unusual sequence in *Deadly Currents* is the filming of a meeting of Palestinian activists (masked) planning the abduction and killing of a collaborator. (This raises a question. Why didn't Jacobovici warn the collaborator? Perhaps the conspirators made sure to keep him close by. Does this make him a co-conspirator? This is probably an old question for reporters in tight situations. Are there any new answers?)

We can all breathe a bit easier now that Rabin has replaced Shamir, but Jacobovici's well-made film confirms that, whatever our views, we can't expect miracles. "Miracle" here means a (moderately) lasting peace satisfactory to (something like) all.

Consenting Adults (Hollywood). Makers of suspense films are all cracked. They think that, by whipping up a rush of suspense, they can con us into overlooking the howling flaws in their complicated plots. There are very few exceptions to this law of overconfidence. *Consenting Adults*, written by Matthew Chapman and directed by Alan J. Pakula, is no such exception.

Kevin Kline and wife live in a posh Atlanta suburb next to a newcomer couple, Kevin Spacey and wife. Their proximity leads to a suggestion by Spacey to Kline that they indulge in a little wife-swapping. (Wives are only pawns in men's games in this picture.) So the picture starts, and for a while continues, as an attempt at salaciously teasing comedy.

Then it splits—and becomes a story of murder, with the wrong man accused. The etiquette of mystery-reviewing bars me from listing the five or six glaring holes in what follows: I'll cite only one, as discreetly as possible. A very twisty plot, involving a million-dollar insurance scam, absolutely depends on one husband getting into the other husband's bed in the middle of the night and never noticing that the woman he then makes love with is not the other man's wife. The scene is not even shot in especially dim light.

As the wives, Mary Elizabeth Mastrantonio is wasted and Rebecca Miller is affectedly inept. Spacey shows a nice change of tack and temper from *Glengarry Glen Ross*. Kline is a good comedian but is not much use in a serious role. (I know he has played Hamlet. I saw some of it on T.V.)

A River Runs Through It (Columbia). The trouble is, it's more or less what we expect. We feel that we've seen it before we go. There will be magnificent Montana landscapes, there will be pleasant shots of fly-fishing. The minister-father will convey to his two sons an ethics that derives as much from fly-fishing as from his Presbyterianism. And so it proves.

Richard Friedenberg has done some rearranging of Norman Maclean's well-liked novella—not enough to jar Maclean devotees, I'd guess, but also not enough to make the film seem a helpful increment to the original. My own trouble with the novella is not soothed. Though taken by its atmosphere and the gnarled homely precepts, I can't quite see a connection between the action of the story and its aura. In what way would the lives of the two sons have been different if they had grown up far from mountains and fishing? Isn't it strange that the son who is the better fisherman, therefore closer to fishing ethics and aesthetics, is the one who goes to the dogs?

Robert Redford couldn't have directed more reverently if he had been filming Izaak Walton. Craig Sheffer and Brad Pitt as the brothers, Tom Skerritt as their father, do their best to satisfy readers' expectations, but the very act of filming makes this an incompleat angler.

Waterland (Fine Line). Jeremy Irons must certainly be offered a lot of scripts, and

FILMS WORTH SEEING

Bob Roberts. *Tim Robbins, who stars, also wrote and directed this sizzler about political campaigning. Not much fresh news, but Robbins keeps it crackling along. (Reviewed 10/5/92)* **Glengarry Glen Ross.** *David Mamet's adaptation of his excellent play. Not quite as powerful as the original but gripping—and moving in its perceptions of men trapped in petty, semicrooked salesmen's lives. Superb acting. (10/26/92)* **Of Mice and Men.** *John Malkovich is weak as the strong Lenny, but Gary Sinise is staunch as his pal-protector. Steinbeck's carpentered tragedy, though spottily served, still generates some force. (11/2/92)* **Simple Men.** *Hal Hartley's quietly witty, imaginative account of two brothers looking for their fugitive father on Long Island. Hartley is the best new American director since Jim Jarmusch. (11/9/92)* **—SK**

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certainly most of them must be duds; but that's a poor excuse for choosing this ridiculous twaddle. We open on Irons, burdened with tragic secrets, teaching high school in—brace yourself—Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. For various reasons, including the torpor of his class and the fact that his tenure at the school is unraveling anyway, he tells his group of adolescents the story of his life, which includes the history of his marriage and his family—and a murder—back in the waterlands of eastern England, the fens of Lincolnshire and adjacent counties.

The story is like up-to-date synthetic Brontë, waterlogged and swollen. It includes a teenage abortion by his girlfriend-now-wife, their consequent childlessness, his loony brother, and more. This lengthy reminiscence, shown in flashback, is followed by a marital breakup in Pittsburgh and a quasi-mystical reunion back in the waterlands. In the wet Movielands, rather.

Peter Prince adapted the screenplay from a novel by Graham Swift, for no apparent reason. Peter Gyllenhaal directed—soberly—a cast that includes Irons's wife, Sinead Cusack, as his screen wife. A better fate is deserved by both.

Tous les Matins du Monde (October). Another odd choice by a star, but at least he has made a career of oddities. Fresh from his slog through Columbus in *1492*, Gérard Depardieu becomes the seventeenth-century French composer Marin Marais, and becomes him more thoroughly than he ever became Columbus in all that long bore. This film has to do with Marais's devotion when young to his master, Monsieur de Sainte-Colombe, and also his devotion to his master's daughter. The young Marais is played pleasantly by Depardieu's son, Guillaume.

Sainte-Colombe is done by the more than reliable Jean-Pierre Marielle; and the film focuses less on story than on his sacerdotal consecration to the viol and its music. He lives an almost eremitic life for his art. Perhaps there was some attempt here to do with music-making what Jacques Rivette did with painting in *La Belle Noiseuse*—cinematize an artistic process. But this film is not nearly as interesting as Rivette's because watching music being played offers a good deal less to the eye than watching a painter at work.

The director, Alain Corneau, makes the opening quite exciting: a five-minute or so close-up of Depardieu, aged, wearing cosmetics and wig, as he instructs unseen students in the viol according to his master's example. But after this promisingly ingenious start, the film just wears on and on with lots of seventeenth-century French baroque music for the viol—a taste that not all of us have cultivated. •

Mark Stevens on Art

The Shock of the Old

At the outset of a celebrated museum show my mood often blackens. There are too many people, the air is stale with reverence, the catalog is burdensome. The pictures wait in pretty rows like postage stamps in a pedant's collection. Big informative blocks of text on the wall call for attention. Read this, know that, look here. I usually hurry through to get a feeling for the show's structure, and then I take a long recess. The moment I leave the exhibit my mood improves. I return with a lighter spirit, prepared at last to look at art.

This odd pattern of behavior recently came into focus when the new director of the National Gallery of Art in Washington, Earl A. Powell III, announced that his museum would mount fewer exhibitions and concentrate more on its permanent collection. His announcement made me want to stand and cheer. I began to acknowledge, finally, how much I have come to hate the celebrated shows. Which does not mean that I don't love them, too. But the hatred is more interesting, since it hardly seems a useful instinct for an art critic. At the same time, I have come to relish the permanent collections beyond all obvious reason—to the point that whenever someone from out of town asks me what shows to see at the local museums, I just say, "The Frick."

Could it be that the age of the great museum exhibition is finally receding? Are we entering a calmer period of renewed interest in permanent collections? Probably not. This fall, in New York alone, beautiful retrospectives of Matisse, Magritte, and Ribera fill the museums. And there are plenty more big shows being prepared. The art establishment *must* create large exhibits: it is what many

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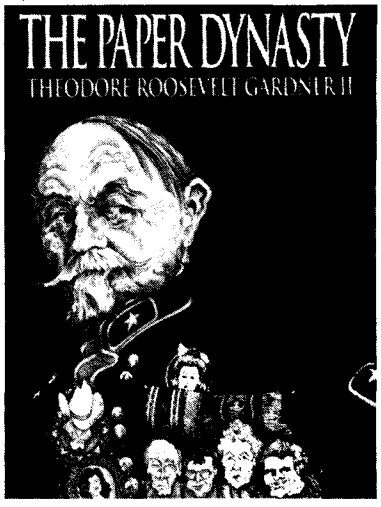

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MEMORIES OF THE SOUTHERN CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT

TEXT AND PHOTOGRAPHS BY DANNY LYON

Foreword by Julian Bond

"Danny Lyon's photographs provide wonderful windows for seeing the civil rights movement as it actually unfolded."
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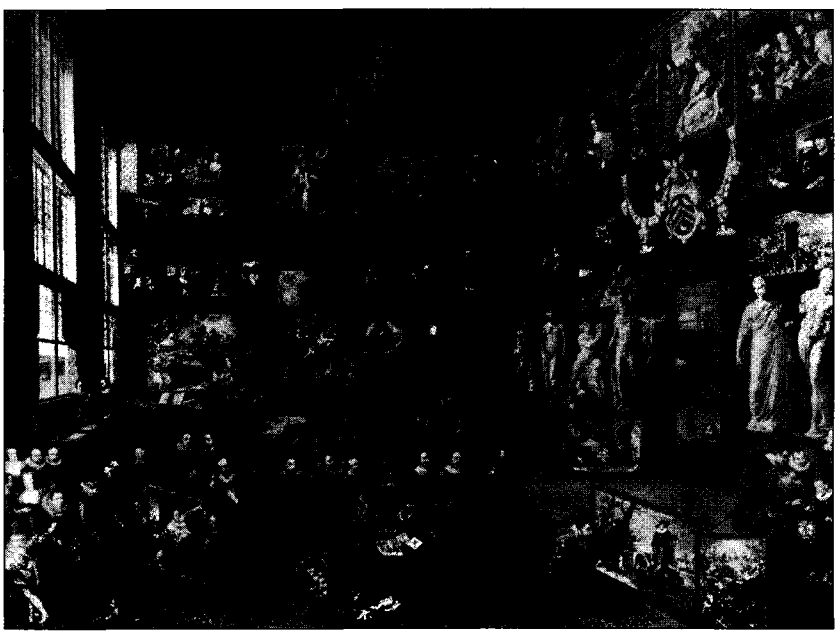
curators do, it is how directors make a name. For much of the public, moreover, the presentation of the large exhibits has become the main business of museums. Many prominent institutions have added a barn or two simply for the purpose of displaying the temporary goods. The shows give museums a sense of momentum and a boost to attendance, which are vital for fund-raising from the government, the corporations, and the wealthy. Given half a chance, a museum director will tell you that more people go to museums than to sports events.

But the momentum has slowed. Like most institutions in a recession, museums are financially pressed. Their fixed costs have increased dramatically over the years; sources of funding grow less quickly in the current economy. The government regards art suspiciously, meanly. As a result, corporations retreat from all but the safest shows. Moreover, the cost of insuring paintings now worth many, many millions is exorbitant. Without a federal indemnity to underwrite the cost of insuring the art, museums could not mount big loan shows. And beyond that, collectors and museums are increasingly reluctant to lend important works for reasons of conservation and national pride.

Art is also less fashionable now. It is less useful, therefore, as public relations, whether for collectors seeking social status or corporations (and governments) looking for fancy p.r. In addition to Toyotas, the big bad Japanese once regularly shipped us gentle, exquisite shows; there seem to be fewer such exports these days. There is also an obvious revulsion from the spirit of exaggeration typical of the last ten years, which was most extravagantly embodied in the "blockbuster." In the future, monographic shows will probably become somewhat smaller, somewhat less common, as curators find it more difficult to secure loans and funding. In particular, there will be fewer expensive "treasure" shows, less loot like "Tut" or "Scythian Gold."

Still, it was never just the treasure shows, which critics easily despised, that darkened my mood. If the meretricious glamour of those shows turned art into a commodity and spectacle—well, I for one always felt rather corruptible. What was a little vulgarity if it meant the chance to see a great Rubens from some obscure and distant place? And I wasn't planning a trip to Scythia anytime soon. Some Faustian bargaining seemed forgivable. What was difficult to admit was that even the great monographic shows disturbed me—Manet, Titian, Degas, Van Dyck, Watteau, Zurbarán, Veronese, Seurat, and so on, that marvelous parade of retrospectives that has enriched scholarship, brought superb works to this country, and inspired people to learn about art. These exhibits foster certain ways of seeing, not bad in themselves, that diminish our capacity to engage art in many other important ways. The exhibition mania, for all its achievements, has finally become blinding, tyrannical.



THE PICTURE GALLERY OF CORNELIS VAN DER GEEST
BY WILLEM VAN HAECHT, 1628

In his essay "The Problem of Museums," written in 1923, Paul Valéry observed that "many of them are admirable, none are delightful. Delight has little to do with the principles of classification, conservation, and public utility, clear and reasonable though these may be." What he said generally of museums is true particularly of exhibitions. As a rule, even the best are admirably undelightful.

They are schoolish in spirit and official in tone. They transform art into art history; they turn education into instruction. You can wander around an exhibit in your own way, of course, but it requires an unusual degree of independence—and, I believe, a tiring struggle—to resist the many efforts being made to provide you with an educational experience. The Metropolitan Museum, when you go to see a big show, seems a design against delight. You must climb dozens of stairs to reach the entrance. Upon paying the admission charge you must put on an official badge. At the exhibit's entrance, you are asked to buy headphones so that your ears can begin educating your eyes.

These mechanical devices, which take you on a tour, add a dehumanizing aura to the exhibit rooms. The taped voice may be charming, cultivated; but you might as well be a schoolboy being led by the ear to the blackboard. You have given yourself over. You have stopped talking to yourself. The people wearing headphones often behave as if they have no minds of their own, while also appearing very serious. They will stare for some allotted time at a picture while the professor within talks. The more spontaneous will sometimes drift off, momentarily lost, like butterflies without a flower, until they can locate the next picture. Many must be so addicted to electronics, education, and noise—or so lonely around art—that they feel lost without the company of a stranger's voice.

It is understandable that scholars should want to bring together as much work as possible. That helps scholarship and is a sign of respect for the artist. As a consequence, however, the shows are generally too large for pleasure. Their size discourages lingering with a picture, because you still have ten rooms to go. (Besides, the hot breath of the herd is at your back.) So you often glance at pictures as if they are ads in a magazine about the artist. Typically, you are freshest at the beginning, when the art itself is weakest. By the middle rooms, when the art is often best, it is hard not to feel pressed by the crowd, your feet, and a certain embarrassment that you are not seeing or feeling well enough. Eventually you will push toward a great painting that is partially concealed behind people. Having already looked at 150 pictures, you may well feel almost nothing. Perhaps, in recompense, you will read the wall panel.

Retrospectives teach you that an artist, to achieve greatness, must struggle to divide himself into periods. The message is roughly this: art has a beginning, when the young artist is influenced by his family background and some important master; a middle, when the artist escapes and

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comes into his own (attaway!); and an end, when he courageously confronts death or courageously ignores death, producing the sublime "last works." In the galleries, the periods themselves are introduced by large educational wall panels, which suggest the context in which you might consider the art to come. Toward the end of many exhibits at the Metropolitan Museum, the organizers have thoughtfully placed desks where visitors can sit and read the catalog should they feel in need of more instruction.

At the same time that they are schoolish, many of the important retrospectives also serve as a form of spectacle. Like the trashy treasure shows, they are routinely promoted as something you can't afford to miss, like a comet that comes around every century. The vast and marvelous Matisse show at the Museum of Modern Art, more than 400 works strong, is everywhere being presented as a "once in a lifetime" opportunity. This unholy alliance between pedantry and the must-see—one gets the feeling that each is using the other—reminds me of the way that people in the Renaissance would treat the arrival of some great novelty, such as the hippopotamus. They would rush to gawk, and learn about nature besides.

The catalog of such an exhibition, bulked up like an athlete on steroids, displays the same divided character. It serves both the coffee table and the library, makes a splash and a footnote. In an old master show, the text is by scholars for scholars, and it may occasionally be important as scholarship; but there is almost never an attempt to include any personal or idiosyncratic response to the art as art. That would be regarded as fluffy journalism. The text of a show about a contemporary artist, in turn, is almost always just public relations with a Ph.D.

If most retrospectives are too big, they are also not big enough. That is because the unstated ambition of the retrospective (as a form) is to be complete. But there are always important missing pieces, which stand out by virtue of not being there. The current Ribera retrospective, for example, cries out for certain pictures. This missing-piece phenomenon adds another peculiarity to the typical catalog. It may be big and expensive. It may be the most important book published in years about an artist. Yet it will probably lack entries on many important works. A catalog is often an aborted book.

At the end of many shows, you can buy the catalog and souvenirs. You are bracketed, then, by the headphones and the shop. You enter a student and leave a consumer. You can take pride in your new possession: you've done Degas. What lasting impression do you depart with? More often than not, it is one of tony reverence for the artist himself. You have been led to make a story of the evolution of his style, to personalize his achievement. Devoted scholars have spent years on whatever he did or touched. The artist is glorified. The art is evidence of his glory. The retrospective celebrates the gloried self and its permutations. If photographs exist, a retrospective will almost always begin with an impressive portrait.

A curious atmosphere develops: the giddy light of the apotheosis, the heavy shadow of the monument. Was the vast 1980 Picasso exhibit at the Museum of Modern Art really about art? Is the current Matisse show? Or do they raise a monument and send a kiss heavenward? The retrospectives of living artists also demand something akin to reverence. There is rarely any attempt to discriminate within an artist's oeuvre, to say that perhaps this is more interesting than that. Or, indeed, to place an artist as honorably minor. What a relief it would have been, for example, to have seen Francis Bacon less praised in his recent retrospective. You would never know from the retrospectives of recent artists that there are few great artists at any time, that many periods have only interesting small fry. Today an artist is great or he is nothing. There is no in-between, nothing between star and dust.

The taste for monumentality is essentially morbid. The glorifying retrospective, as a form, has the smell of death. I find myself glad when many works are missing from these retrospectives; they are the holes through which the art escapes. In the actual making and experiencing of art, there should be something open and unexpected and even tentative—which is to say, a vivid quality of life. In a retrospective, however, these values can be served only by struggling against the prevailing character of the form.

Not so the permanent collection. It can restore what a retrospective takes away. I have often emerged from a celebrated exhibit and stared, amazed, into the beguiling emptiness of the permanent collection. Are people mad? They could have great art to themselves, yet they move with the herd. If you are a passionate lover of art, hungry for new experience and already well acquainted with the permanent collection, then I can understand subjecting yourself to a gigantic popular show. But those who crowd the rooms do not, I think, make their choice mainly for that reason. They go to museums for the event.

Valéry did not, it should be noted, consider the permanent collections as appealing as I do:

> Only an irrational civilization, and one devoid of the taste for pleasure, could have devised such a domain of incoherence. This juxtaposition of dead visions has something insane about it, with each thing jealously competing for the glance that will give it life.... The ear could not tolerate the sound of ten orchestras at once.... I feel sure that Egypt, China, Greece, in their wisdom and refinement, never dreamed of this system of putting together works which simply destroy each other: never arranged units of incompatible pleasure by order of number, and according to abstract principles.

He was writing, of course, before exhibitions began defining the character of the museum. Today, the visual cacophony about which he complained provides an escape from the confined beat, the constricting coherence, of an exhibit. The permanent collection may be mixed-up and discordant, but that may suit those who enjoy the multiplicity of the world.

A retrospective is romantic, a celebration of the singular self. It concentrates and narrows our gaze, no matter how varied the individual's art may be. The great virtue of a permanent collection, by contrast, is that it is panoramic in character. One will focus on particular works; but the artist himself does not stand astride the world. In the permanent collection no artist is so well represented that he loses his reticence, which explains the wonderful quiet (*pace* Valéry) of these rooms. In the permanent collections, one can escape, for a while, the great baying hounds of the self.

Without such distractions, the art itself—of both individuals and cultures—seems to matter more. A painting's meaning, even its look, changes when it is placed between paintings by the same artist or paintings by different artists. The former encourages biographical or psychological analysis, as the picture is measured against the internal development of a single artist's work. The latter demands greater skills at formal and iconographic analysis. Permanent collections confine the mind to a culture rather than a man, which is to say they hardly confine it at all. It is difficult, of course, to compare a seventeenth-century Dutch interior in one room to a nineteenth-century French interior in another, or a Descent from the Cross to a Nude Descending a Staircase—but there is great pleasure to be found in the leap across the open space.

In a permanent collection, you can always tell those who really like pictures. They look at the image before the name tag. They are not checking off a list, deciding what counts on the basis of fame, or testing their knack for recognizing signature styles. They look to look. A

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permanent collection, while acknowledging genius, also celebrates a rough democracy. If you pay attention, minor artists having a good day are constantly knocking their betters off the walls. Analyzing why, or learning why you may be wrong in your preference, is the way you come to possess a tradition.

Those who love permanent collections rarely stay long. When there are many first-class works, the intensity will soon become numbing. If you go while fresh, however, the various visions are not necessarily quarrelsome. I am very fond of the Spanish room at the Met, for example, which would seem to embody Valéry's nightmare: in a single small room a great Velázquez, several great El Grecos, a great Murillo, a lesser but still unforgettable Zurbarán. How could four such different but powerful sensibilities possibly share a room? But they do, for many fascinating reasons. To cite just one, a couple of El Grecos are in his more realistic style (not the flaming visionary manner of *View of Toledo*). The penetrating and bespectacled Grand Inquisitor of El Greco can therefore meet the gaze of Velázquez's Juan de Pareja. It is an unforgettable meeting, once you notice it.

Meanwhile the Murillo—a strong painting about maternal softness—makes an excellent foil to both. Your mind must stretch to encompass these various sensibilities in close proximity, each of the highest order yet none dominating the others. And then, with the world already grown lush with possibility, you might suddenly glance through a doorway and notice the young Van Dyck's aristocratic self-portrait. And the world grows even richer, for Van Dyck's languorous, resplendent, marvelously trivial self-regard was something no Spaniard of that period could have brought off. And if the Spanish are the greater for it, the world would still be less without Van Dyck.

A permanent collection mostly stays put, which seems almost lazy, even immoral, in our world. The traveling blockbuster has fostered the impression that truly exciting art must move from place to place. The new Guggenheim seems to want to institutionalize such a view; its holdings may become nomadic, traveling to its various locales. The masterpieces will leave comet trails. In fact, art that can't move is more truly interesting, despite the inimitable impact of a great work seen for the first time. Art that stays put leaves the movement to you. Imagine, for example, with what intensity an eighteenth-century painter from northern Europe would travel to Italy—knowing that he could probably make only one trip in his lifetime.

As for art always at hand, there your "movement" is still greater. A great work yields itself over time. So do you. It is a very different thing to see the same Rembrandt at 20, at 40, at 60. That strong-soft Murillo mentioned earlier repelled me as corny when I was 20. My view has changed, and I enjoy marking the change when I pass by. Living with an important permanent collection over a lifetime is like living near a great work of architecture. Because it's part of your daily life, you will not experience the casual excitement of the tourists who visit this and then that cathedral. You may not even notice anything at all for long periods of time. But you will come to know the collection cumulatively, almost unconsciously, just as people come to know the moods of a great building. Over time a permanent collection can provide the same kind of supporting role in your sensibility.

Around the big shows, it seems to me, there is always a prying, self-congratulatory light. Our profligate way with light, shining it into every last corner, is a modern affliction—a way of, among other things, concealing vision behind knowledge. Or perhaps knowingness. Our culture thirsts for shade, for a "not knowing" of the higher kind. I am a great believer, now, in the value of an enlightened ignorance. Would more information about Key West have improved the poetry of Wallace Stevens? Should Delacroix have known more about Morocco or Picasso about Africa? Everyone, to the extent of his or her abilities, should cultivate similar patches of ignorance, should work hard to become an occasional fool and lost wanderer.

There is no better place than the permanent collection. I know little of Islamic art, yet I rarely go to the Met without visiting the Islamic wing. I never read the labels. Often I couldn't say whether I'm in Persia or in India. Yet I know many of the objects by heart. Perhaps I'll name them someday, but for the time being I prefer their distant caress and strange familiarity. Incidentally, although the rooms are among the most beautiful in New York City, usually just a handful of people are walking around. A few Japanese doing their duty. An Arab who knows what he's looking for. A guard.

Artists and critics like to point out that a museum, far from being a temple to the true, is a collection of prejudices. What goes on display is governed by the tastes of the moment, the vicissitudes of collecting, the fashions of the academy, the demands of the public. This is so obvious as to be hardly worth mentioning: the great museums will always serve their times. What is less obvious, however, is that the permanent collection is more radical, in its way, than the latest theoretically correct and scientifically up-to-date retrospective. Anyone who dislikes our moment can find hope in those lonely rooms. The permanent collections remember what is forgotten. They demonstrate that no particular culture or artist has the final word. They are the home of the difficult but enabling truth that nothing lasts. •

The Declinist

By Jacob Heilbrunn

Kissinger: A Biography by Walter Isaacson

(Simon and Schuster, 893 pp., $30)

When Henry Kissinger appeared in September before the Senate Select Committee on POW-MIA Affairs, his legendary temper turned the hearing into a nasty wrangle over the prosecution of the Vietnam War. On the previous day several of his former colleagues from the Nixon years had testified that American prisoners were knowingly abandoned at the end of the war. Kissinger would have none of this. Declaring that he had moved "heaven and earth" to free any prisoners, he improbably attempted to cast Melvin Laird, James Schlesinger, and Winston Lord as fools or liars. The hearings may have put Kissinger back in the spotlight, but they did nothing to revive the fading reputation of a man who had once been the toast of Washington and a fawning press.

Walter Isaacson's new biography shows why the Kissinger aura, part achievement and part flimflam, had to lose its luster. There have been numer-

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ous books by journalists and scholars on everything from Kissinger's undergraduate dissertation to his Middle East policy, but there has been no full-length biography. (Kissinger's own memoirs, however well written, were finally a prolonged exercise in self-promotion and self-exculpation.) The best of the books, David Landau's *Kissinger*, carried the story up to 1972. Isaacson's account, which appropriates much of Landau's material on the early Kissinger, is vastly more ambitious; and it fulfills its ambition at least in the sense that these 893 pages offer sufficient evidence for a judgment of their subject. Isaacson, an assistant managing editor at *Time*, aims to integrate Kissinger's early life and academic career with his tenure as national security adviser and secretary of state. Drawing on extensive interviews with Kissinger, with Richard Nixon, with former aides, childhood friends, and business clients, and drawing, too, on Kissinger's private papers and transcripts of FBI wiretaps, Isaacson's book is nothing less than Kissingerian in its intended scope and sweep.

Isaacson, who was the co-author of *The Wise Men*, which reverentially chronicled the careers of John McCloy, W. Averell Harriman, George Kennan, Charles Bohlen, Robert Lovett, and Dean Acheson, might have been expected to pen a star-struck portrait that smuggled Kissinger into that pantheon. But he hasn't. Shedding the genteel manners of his previous writing on the establishment, Isaacson has gone on the attack. The old, dutiful tone is gone. Few of Isaacson's readers will come away thinking of his subject as another lofty, self-effacing public servant.

Still, Isaacson has succumbed again to some of the other grievous weaknesses that marred his earlier work. For a start, much of his obese book consists of chatter. He is pretty good on the atmospherics: we see Kissinger groveling, ranting, cajoling, thundering, lying, throwing temper tantrums, and abusing—even wire-tapping—members of his staff. What it all adds up to is another matter. Many of the tales are little more than titillating gossip and snide put-downs by Kissinger's colleagues, which Isaacson uncritically reports. A competent but uninspired writer, he shows scant interest in evaluating either the source or the importance of this or that juicy tidbit. Tantrums, after all, may mean much or nothing. Bismarck threw them. Kissinger was Bismarckian in his temperament, if nothing else.

More importantly, the book, for all the patient research that went into it, contains few revelations about Kissinger. Recycling clichés and formulaic phrases

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is a poor substitute for hard thought. Isaacson succumbs to the biographer's temptation to regard the historical context as an intrusion on the narrative. Or, to put it another way, his book lacks a context. In focusing so minutely on Kissinger, in tracing in such personal detail his astonishing rise from immigrant origins to the West Wing, he loses sight of what surely remains the principal reason for writing about Kissinger—his public service, which is unintelligible without a sense of the public scene.

Isaacson's emphasis on personality does allow him to explore the curious relationship between Nixon and Kissinger, but the fact of Nixon's leadership in foreign affairs is weirdly soft-pedaled, no doubt because it would interfere with the gossip. This has a distorting effect. It was Nixon, not Kissinger, who carried out the initiative to China. Though Kissinger was hailed as a superman by the press on his return from China in 1972, his task, as John Robert Greene writes in *The Limits of Power*, "was to confirm the details of a meeting that had already been agreed upon by all parties."

Nor does Isaacson make a serious attempt to grapple with the ambiguous legacy of Kissinger's approach to foreign policy. He harps on Kissinger's personal failings but veers wildly in assessing his statesmanship. His only real argument is to contend simplistically that Kissinger's fixation on realpolitik rendered him oblivious to moral concerns, which is to say that his beliefs were incompatible with American democracy. Again, given Issacson's obsession with the personal, this has a peculiar effect. The notion that Kissinger was unable to understand American democratic ways rests on the myth that American foreign policy was in the hands of innocents until a *Hofjude*, a court Jew, stepped onto the scene. Here Isaacson's veneration for the old establishment types makes it seem almost as if a foreign Jew sullied the pristine confines of the Council on Foreign Relations. There is an unwitting compatibility between Isaacson's portrait, in its personalism and its analytical simplicity, and the anti-Semitic demonization of Kissinger by the far right during the 1970s.

I am sure he didn't intend this, but the implications of his portrait are wrong and unfortunate. Kissinger's views on nuclear strategy or Asian communism cannot in any meaningful way be ascribed to his ethnic identity. He understood American democracy perfectly. He used his understanding to climb the greasy pole. His opportunism, a purely personal quality that contributed to the eclipse of his career, was exactly right for the time and the circumstances in which he launched his particular kind of career. As he shifted from position to position, he showed a great talent for what is politely called realism, a view of the world behind which opportunism may easily hide.

Heinz Alfred Kissinger was born into an Orthodox Jewish family on May 27, 1923, in the Bavarian town of Fürth. His vivacious mother, Paula, insisted that the family immigrate to the United States. On August 20, 1938, less than three months before Kristallnacht, the family left Germany. Kissinger was 15. Thirteen of his relatives perished in the Nazi death camps. Though Kissinger himself had endured anti-Semitic taunts from the locals in Fürth, he later insisted that "that part of my childhood is not a key to anything. I was not consciously unhappy. I was not acutely aware of what was going on."

Isaacson has a different view. He believes that the

> Nazi experience could have instilled in Kissinger either of two approaches to foreign policy: an idealistic, moralistic approach dedicated to protecting human rights; or a realist, realpolitik approach that sought to preserve order through balances of power and a willingness to use force as a tool of diplomacy.

The dichotomy, of course, is false. Idealists may resort to force, and balance of power addicts may champion human rights. The subtle Kissinger would bridle at the crudity of such a speculation. Surely any combination of conclusions could be drawn from an experience of the Holocaust. Kissinger may have insulated himself from the experience, as Isaacson inconsistently implies at other points. In this matter, Kissinger's own statement is the best guide, and Isaacson gives no cogent reason to doubt it.

Isaacson wishes to impute to Kissinger an ignorance of American ways. He echoes Landau in complaining that Kissinger never showed "any appreciation for such archetypal American imaginations as Mark Twain and Thomas Jefferson and Ben Franklin." It is not clear why Twain or Franklin should have spoken with particular force to such an individual. And at the same time Isaacson points out that Kissinger outdid his fellow immigrants in assimilating to America. It is certainly true that his early years give no sign of a Metternichian diplomat in the making. While he was a student at George Washington High School, Kissinger worked at the Leopold Ascher Brush Company, where he squeezed acid and water out of shaving brush bristles. He went on to score top marks at City College and planned to become an accountant, his father's new field.

A draft notice in February 1943 disrupted those plans. Assigned to study engineering at Lafayette College in Easton, Pennsylvania, Kissinger was spellbound by a speech on the need to destroy Nazism delivered by a swaggering, monocle-wearing German expatriate named Fritz Kraemer. The would-be American Kissinger must have felt an attraction to the Germanness of Kraemer, for all his anti-German message. He immediately sent him a flattering note: "Dear Pvt. Kraemer. I heard you speak yesterday. This is how it should be done. Can I help you somehow? Pvt. Kissinger." The by now legendary note had the desired effect: Kraemer adopted the young Jewish immigrant as his protégé.

Kraemer's influence on Kissinger's intellectual development can hardly be exaggerated. The master transmitted his reverence for order and stability in international affairs to his pupil, and exposed him to Kant, Spengler, and Dostoyevsky. For Kraemer, Isaacson points out, "a breakdown in social order ... provided a dangerous opening for totalitarian regimes of either the left or the right." Kissinger's great fear of social breakdown helps to explain much of his subsequent actions and opinions.

Kraemer launched Kissinger. He pulled strings to have him made personal translator to the commanding general of the 84th Division when it marched into Germany, and he arranged for him to become administrator of Krefeld in Bavaria. In between restoring social order and cracking down on suspected Nazis, Kissinger enjoyed himself to the fullest. With a beautiful blonde in tow, he zoomed around in a white Mercedes taken from a Nazi industrialist and lived in a palatial villa. "What a set up!" his friend Jerry Bechofer reminisced. "You could tell how much he liked the trappings of power." When Kissinger's tour of duty ended in 1946, he heeded Kraemer's injunction: "Go to a fine college. A gentlemen does not go to the College of the City of New York."

Kissinger entered Harvard in 1947. There he attached himself to his second mentor, the notoriously eccentric professor of government William "Wild Bill" Elliott. An all-American tackle at the University of Vanderbilt, Elliott had attended Balliol College, where he imbibed the powerful Jowett gospel of public service. Elliott became a vehement cold warrior. As Landau observed:

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> Doubtless there was an intoxication of power, but Bill Elliott had long been a dedicated internationalist ... and there was a sense of duty that underlay the self-indulgent, vainglorious obsession with government service. It was that peculiar combination of lust and purpose that Elliott transmitted to Kissinger.

Kissinger's senior thesis certainly demonstrated his lust to impress. In 383 undergraduate pages, he demonstrated that he had read or heard of Kant, Spengler, Toynbee, Descartes, Hegel, Hume, and Spinoza. Carl J. Friedrich, who was then the head of Harvard's government department, confessed that he stopped reading Kissinger's lucubrations after 150 pages. Kissinger was awarded highest honors on graduation, but his fate would not be political theory.

In the time that he worked for a doctorate in government at Harvard, Kissinger displayed certain extra-intellectual skills. He established that he was an extraordinary operator. He created a program called the Harvard International Seminar and invited budding politicians from around the world to spend a summer under his tutelage. He also founded a journal called *Confluence* and solicited the contributions of academics, journalists, and politicians, who, Isaacson observes, "were flattered to be asked to write for a Harvard-based journal, even one that went largely unread." Whether or not his journal was read, it provided Kissinger with another opportunity to win friends and influence people.

Kissinger's successes, and the self-importance of his carriage, quickly aroused resentment in his fellow graduate students. Isaacson reports that Adam Ulam posted a photograph of Kissinger with a bull's eye. "Adam and the others would joke about Kissinger a lot," recalled Harvard professor Samuel Beer. "I think some of the people even used it for darts." Still, for all his preening, Kissinger was vastly more talented than many of his peers. Arthur Schlesinger Jr. solicited his comments on a paper attacking the doctrine of massive retaliation, and they so impressed Schlesinger that he sent them on to *Foreign Affairs*, where they were published in April 1955. Nor are Kissinger's stiff manners all that surprising, given the slights that a young Jewish immigrant had to endure at Harvard. In his memoirs Kissinger famously recalled that McGeorge Bundy, for one, "tended to treat me with the combination of politeness and subconscious condescension that upper-class Bostonians reserve for people of, by New England standards, exotic backgrounds and excessively intense personal style."

On completion of his dissertation on Metternich and Castlereagh, which was published under the title *A World Restored*, Kissinger informed Bundy that he wished to be placed on a fast track to tenure. Bundy dismissed the request, and Kissinger, like other novices at Harvard, had to be content with an instructorship. But the *Foreign Affairs* piece on nuclear weapons secured him a post in 1955 at the Council on Foreign Relations in New York as director of a working group on limited nuclear war. The feverish pace of life in Manhattan made Harvard seem like a listless backwater.

An important lesson that Kissinger learned in New York, according to Isaacson, was how to mimic the forms of the members of the council: "These were all sophisticated men, polished by success in a way that Kissinger yearned to be.... Kissinger watched how they interacted." Kissinger elbowed out the other members of the study group: what was to have been a collaborative effort became his 450-page book *Nuclear Weapons and Foreign Policy*, which appeared in 1957 and argued the doctrine of limited nuclear war, or what became known in the nuclear priesthood as "flexible response." The book's themes were not original; Basil Liddell Hart and Bernard Brodie had made similar arguments. (The problem that troubled them was the inefficacy of mas-

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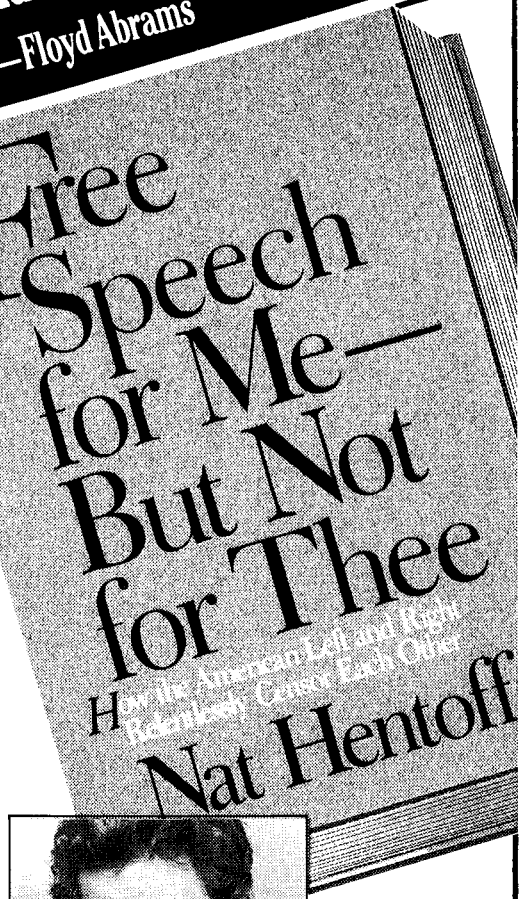

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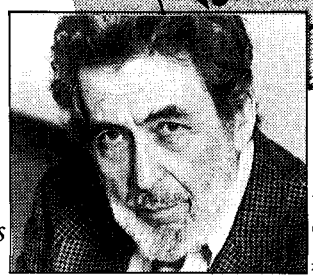
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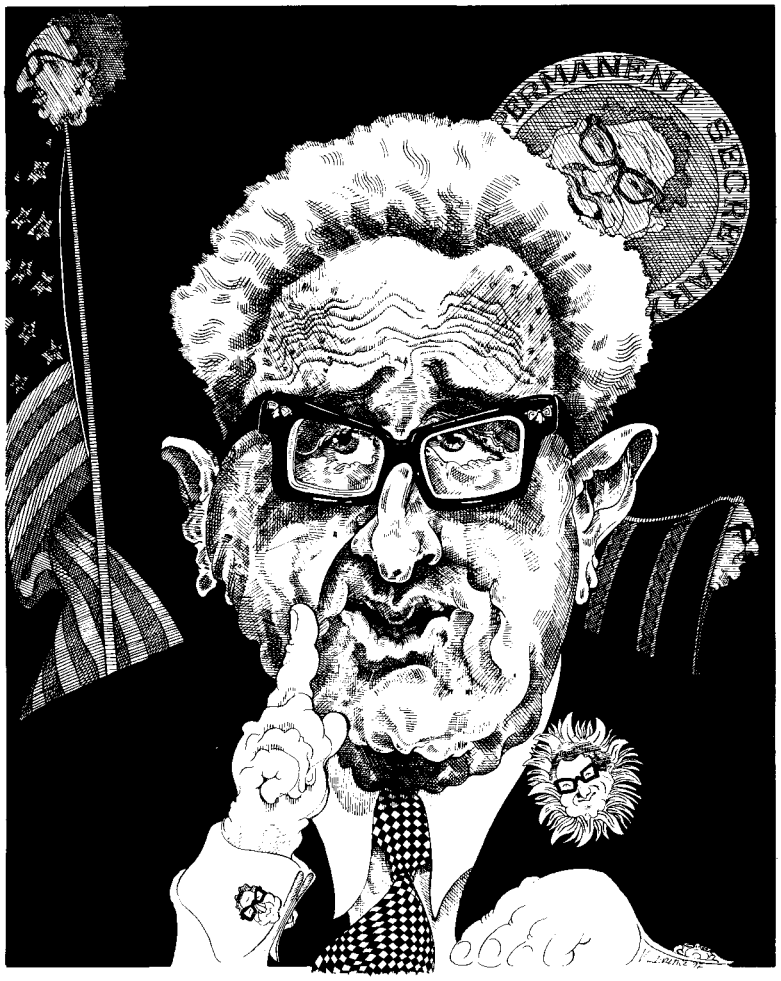
sive nuclear retaliation as a political or military instrument in Europe, where a nuclear confrontation seemed most likely to take place. They were not suggesting that a nuclear war between the United States and the Soviet Union would remain limited.) But Kissinger's skill at presenting complicated issues in clear and compelling prose made for a surprise best seller in 1957. Meanwhile, he had become a consultant to his third patron, Nelson Rockefeller, and published an international security report that became known as "the answer to Sputnik." "The willingness to engage in nuclear war when necessary," Kissinger instructed his readers, "is part of the price of our freedom." He had become something of a nuclear celebrity. His voice now carried, though not at Harvard, where he faced stiff competition for tenure when he returned in 1957. Finally he was made full professor in 1959.

As a registered Democrat, Kissinger's efforts to enter the political arena were unremitting. He maintained his ties with Rockefeller while he searched for a post in the Kennedy administration. Bundy offered him the crumb of a part-time consultancy and saw to it that even this assignment soured; in Schlesinger's words, Bundy "pretty much blocked his access" to Kennedy. Kissinger had better luck with Johnson, and the Vietnam War gave him his first real opportunity to indulge his penchant for secret negotiations. In 1967, using French contacts with ties to Ho Chi Minh, he persuaded Dean Rusk to allow him to conduct with the North Vietnamese the talks code-named "Pennsylvania."

His aim was to secure an agreement from the Vietnamese to negotiate in return for an American commitment to end the bombing, although that commitment was not to sound like a condition. The approach failed, but the formula for a bombing halt became the official American position. Moreover, Kissinger had established an official link with the Johnson administration that permitted him to monitor the progress of talks with the North Vietnamese. In 1968 his inside channel became invaluable.

While promising the Humphrey campaign Rockefeller's files on Nixon, he furtively approached Nixon's foreign policy adviser, Richard Allen. Terrified by the prospect that Johnson would announce a bombing halt in order to retrieve Humphrey's sagging electoral fortunes, the Nixon camp welcomed Kissinger's readiness to divulge secret information about the course of the Paris talks. In the end, Kissinger proved to be a tease, and the tidbits that he provided (he had no more) led Nixon to wonder where his true loyalties lay. Of course they lay with Kissinger. But the opening to Nixon worked. Kissinger's ostentatious cloak-and-dagger methods, his readiness to be a double agent, impressed the even more devious Nixon. "One factor that had most convinced me of Kissinger's credibility was the length to which he went to protect his secrecy," wrote Nixon, in a supremely Nixonian sentence.

After his narrow victory over Humphrey, Nixon made Kissinger his national security adviser. Nixon clearly relished having a Jew under his thumb; he frequently referred to Kissinger as "my Jewboy." Isaacson details Kissinger's seemingly inexhaustible capacity to endure slights from Nixon. Kissinger's readiness to tolerate anti-Semitic remarks from Nixon demonstrated a readiness to grovel: "Nixon would talk about Jewish traitors," John Erlichmann recalled, "and he'd play off Kissinger, 'Isn't that right, Henry? Don't you agree?' And Henry would respond: 'Well, Mr. President, there are Jews and then there are Jews.'" Later Kissinger would bump his assistant Helmut Sonnenfeldt from Air Force One with the explanation that "I don't think there should be too many Jews around."



HENRY KISSINGER BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

Certainly Kissinger's fawning and intriguing permitted him to amass enormous power over the foreign policy apparatus during Nixon's first term. Nixon, who was determined to assert direct control over foreign policy from the White House, directed Kissinger to "revitalize" the National Security Council in order to bypass the State Department. Kissinger was delighted. In *A World Restored* he had already highlighted the obstacles that bureaucracies pose to inventive policies: "Profound policy thrives on perpetual creation, on a constant redefinition of goals.... Bureaucracies are designed to execute, not to conceive." Undercutting the State Department was comparatively easy: the secretary of state, William Rogers, was something of a patsy, with only a nodding familiarity with international affairs. He was an easy mark for Kissinger, who captured his job [illegible] Nixon's second term.

Kissinger's aides—Alexander Haig, Roger Morris, Anthony Lake, and Morton Halperin—restructured the National Security Council to put Kissinger in control of information flowing to the president. Morris later called it "a seizure of power unprecedented in modern American foreign policy." Isaacson agrees. He contends that Nixon and Kissinger bypassed the bureaucracy in

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order to execute foreign policy "in a manner that was relatively new in the conduct of American affairs: with a growing reliance on deception and secrecy and back channels to avoid having to deal with dissent in Congress, the public, or even within their own Cabinet."

This is wrong. Kissinger had fine American precedents for secrecy and dissimulation. Nixon's and Kissinger's management of foreign policy bears uncanny resemblances to Franklin Roosevelt's and Harry Hopkins' wartime diplomacy. Determined to arrive at a lasting accommodation with Stalin, Roosevelt was an early believer in the "convergence" of the American and Soviet systems. He despised the State Department bureaucracy as inefficient and ineffective and anti-Soviet. Emphasizing personal diplomacy, he preferred to operate through surrogates. Roosevelt even directed his earlier ambassador to Stalin, the pro-Soviet Joseph E. Davies, to establish a "back channel" to the Kremlin; and in 1942 Davies secretly met with Soviet officials in Mexico and Moscow in the hopes of arranging a secret meeting between Roosevelt and Stalin that would exclude Churchill and gain the Soviet dictator's cooperation in constructing the "new world."

In February 1969, Nixon and Kissinger proceeded to establish their "back channel" to the Soviet Union. Rogers was excluded from their first meeting with Soviet Ambassador Anatoly Dobrynin. "Back channels" proceeded to undermine one American negotiating position after another. The first to go was Vietnam. As Nixon and Kissinger saw it, improved relations with Moscow could result in a "linkage" that would compel the Soviet Union to pressure the North Vietnamese to reach an accommodation with the United States in return for credits and arms control treaties. Kissinger importuned Dobrynin's cooperation ten times in 1969. The Soviets quickly realized that reverse linkage could be applied.

Neither Nixon nor Kissinger believed that the war could be won, but they wished to retreat with "honor." On March 18, 1969, in order to pressure North Vietnamese negotiators, Nixon ordered the first secret bombings of North Vietnamese sanctuaries in Cambodia. In Isaacson's view, "American policy was edging toward what had heretofore been an unfamiliar realm: the use of military power not anchored by concerns about morality and international law." Again, this is naive and unlearned. Johnson had earlier bamboozled Congress into passing the Gulf of Tonkin resolution, and Kennedy had connived in the assassination of Diem in 1963. Nixon and Kissinger hardly introduced duplicity into American foreign policy. They merely refined it.

Nowhere was this more obvious than in the secret invasion of Cambodia in April 1970. Isaacson follows William Shawcross's *Sideshow* in arguing that it led to the rise of the Khmer Rouge. Though Kissinger approved of the incursion, he did so under tremendous pressure from Nixon. Stanley Karnow in *Vietnam* has the story, and Isaacson repeats it: one evening a drunken Nixon called Kissinger from Camp David and passed the phone to his crony Charles "Bebe" Rebozo, who announced, "The president wants you to know if this doesn't work, Henry, it's your ass." Nixon slurred in the background: "Ain't that right, Bebe?"

But Kissinger was more than a passive instrument. From 1969 to 1972 he consistently portrayed his marathon talks with Le Duc Tho, his North Vietnamese counterpart, in the most optimistic light to Nixon. Nixon was not fooled and remained skeptical of Kissinger's high-wire act. He doubted that a diplomatic solution could be reached. Indeed, neither Nixon nor Thieu, the president of South Vietnam, wanted a deal in October 1972. Aware of Nixon's views, Kissinger may have wanted to present him with a fait accompli. He arrived at an understanding with Tho, failed to keep Thieu or Nixon apprised of what he was doing, and then returned to Washington to announce, with an irony that must have been intended, that "peace is at hand."

But peace was not in anyone's hand. Nixon was incensed by Kissinger's declaration, and Thieu balked. The North Vietnamese broke off the negotiations, and on December 18, 1972, Nixon mined the Haiphong Harbor and launched the Christmas bombings, from which Kissinger (or so he assured his Georgetown friends) had attempted to dissuade him. In fact, his own attempted end run had been their very cause. As it turned out, the peace accords finally signed on January 27, 1973, did not differ significantly from those Kissinger had negotiated earlier.

Isaacson maintains that "the policy pursued by Nixon and Kissinger became one that depended on deception and secrecy rather than on domestic support for its substance." Perhaps. But a more relevant judgment would be that the national security adviser was treating the president like a foreign power. Of course, diplomacy has to be secret. Of course, it has always involved a degree of deception. But Kissinger broke sinister

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new ground. Isaacson's interpretation is typical of his blinkered, ahistorical approach. Worse yet, Isaacson often fudges his judgments. Despite his objections to deception, he goes on to argue, in a central passage, that

> the Paris agreement was the final element of a reshaped American foreign policy that—rather amazingly—provided the nation with the chance to play as influential a role in the world as it had before the paralyzing despair of its Vietnam involvement. By engineering the end of that war along with the opening to China and the détente with the Soviet Union, Kissinger had helped create a triangular structure for global stability that was beyond the imaginations of the Kennedy and Johnson administrations as well as the inert bureaucracy of the foreign policy establishment.

This is grandiose and perverse. The fact is that Kissinger *and* Nixon had espoused the "triangular" conception of diplomacy precisely because they believed that by linking Vietnam to improved relations with the Soviet Union and China they would win "peace with honor" in 1969. Instead, despite all the diplomatic fireworks, they were repeatedly reduced to employing military force to wring mostly cosmetic concessions from the North Vietnamese. Above all, Nixon and Kissinger did not seek to "provide the nation with the chance to play as influential a role" as it had before the Vietnam War. Quite the contrary. With a vigor that both of them later hoped the country (and its subsequent Republican administrations) would forget, they proclaimed that the United States could at best play the role of *primus inter pares*. They were, Nixon and Kissinger, the first declinists. About America's place in the world, they were pessimists. And the product of their pessimism was détente.

Détente with the Soviet Union had its origins in Nixon's July 1969 Guam Doctrine, which was later dubbed the Nixon Doctrine. Nixon and Kissinger sought to create what they called a new "structure of peace" and to abandon the policy of containing the Soviet Union. The goal was to try to moderate the Soviet Union's behavior by enmeshing it in a web of incentives and rewards—credits, grain, technological transfers—that would bring about Soviet self-containment. The result was to arouse in the American public utopian expectations of perpetual peace, and to allow Leonid Brezhnev to stave off domestic reform through Western aid.

The centerpiece of their declinist efforts was arms control. They focused on a SALT and an ABM treaty. Once again, Kissinger's penchant for secrecy and his egotistical belief in his own powers sabotaged negotiations. He clumsily negotiated behind the back of Gerald Smith, the official negotiator of the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks, cutting him off from crucial information. He failed to endorse a ban on MIRVs, which soon became the single most dangerous and destabilizing technology with which the superpowers threatened each other; and he also neglected to insist on a freeze on ballistic missiles launched by submarines, which also came to torment the nuclear balance in less than a decade. When one considers the consequences of Kissinger's casual jettisoning of the official American negotiating position, it is hard not to conclude that there is something to be said for "inert bureaucracies" to check the virtuosos.

As Tom Wicker wrote in his biography of Nixon, "Kissinger had handed the Soviet Union a huge advantage, permitting Moscow to proceed with what by January 1971 American intelligence agencies knew was a substantial buildup of a missile launching submarine fleet." Kissinger himself later conceded that he had committed "a first-class blunder." Another such blunder came in Nixon's and Kissinger's pledge, in order to seal the signing of the SALT treaty in May 1972, to sell huge grain shipments to the Soviet Union, and the result was the great grain robbery: the United States ended up subsidizing grain sales to the Soviet Union, which drove up prices at home. Linkage had been reversed. As Kissinger conceded, "The Soviets beat us at our own game."

Kissinger liked to approach foreign policy conceptually, but the concept that was central to Kissinger's détente was not triangularity. It was, rather, the conviction that the Soviet Union would not attempt to beat the United States at its own game, that it would no longer seek "incremental" advantages over the United States, which were in any case worthless. Kissinger explained in 1973:

> The determination of national power has changed fundamentally in the nuclear age. Throughout history, the primary concern of most national leaders has been to accumulate geopolitical and military power.... But now both we and the Soviet Union have begun to find that each increment of power does not necessarily represent an increment of usable strength.

This was Kissinger's greatest and most costly error. Brezhnev most certainly did seek marginal advantages—not only in arms control, but also in expanding Soviet influence abroad.

Had the Soviet Union shared Kissinger's view of itself, it would not have massively armed Egypt in 1973 and encouraged its attack on Israel in the Yom Kippur War. Isaacson's account reminds us that Kissinger opposed massively arming Israel once it was under siege. True, Kissinger's rival, Secretary of Defense James Schlesinger, was adamantly opposed to aiding Israel. But from Isaacson's account we now know that Kissinger told Schlesinger that "the best result would be if Israel came out a little ahead but got bloodied in the process, and if the U.S. stayed clear." Isaacson claims that Kissinger "had been properly balancing a concern for Israel's safety with the demands of America's own national interest." Once again, he has it wrong. Kissinger's caution amounted to a reckless disregard for Israel's safety. He and Nixon all but abandoned Israel. It took a full week, and extraordinary pressure, for military assistance to arrive. These cold-blooded calculations of Kissinger's surely give the lie to any sentimentalizing notions about the effects of the Holocaust on his principles.

The cease-fire, which became known as U.N. Resolution 338, was negotiated by Kissinger with the Soviets and passed by the Security Council. Responding to Brezhnev's threatening letter announcing that the Soviet Union would introduce troops to enforce the cease-fire whether or not the United States did so, Kissinger apparently placed the United States on nuclear alert without informing Nixon. The Soviets backed down. It is irresponsible of Isaacson to praise Kissinger for denying arms to Israel and for the nuclear alert, which were both reckless actions. To be sure, Kissinger's skillful shuttle diplomacy succeeded in breaking up the alliance between Syria and Egypt. The treaty signed between Egypt and Israel on January 18, 1974, called for disengagement along the Suez and a U.N. buffer zone between the two states. It was followed by a disengagement treaty signed by Israel and Syria on May 31 in Geneva. But the entire crisis was largely a product of Nixon's and Kissinger's earlier indifference to the Middle East, which had emboldened Brezhnev and the Egyptians. At the same time, Kissinger may well have approved of the decision by OPEC to almost double oil prices in the midst of the Yom Kippur War. He saw OPEC as a force for stability in the region and gave the Shah of Iran, who instigated the price hike, a blank check with which to buy weapons systems. The results were catastrophic. Not only would the weapons purchases help lead to the fall

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of the Shah, but the price hikes hastened the economic decline of the United States. For the oil shocks resulted in stagflation in the United States and the Third World debt crisis: awash in petrodollars, Chase Manhattan and other leading banks lent enormous sums that were never repaid. Kissinger never realized that the United States was declining economically, not politically.

Kissinger's overtures in pursuit of détente prompted a fear that he would cut a deal with Brezhnev over the fate of Israel. Senator Henry Jackson, Daniel Moynihan, and other budding neoconservatives began to attack Kissinger. In 1974 Jackson lobbied for the Jackson-Vanik amendment, which directly tied most favored nation status for the Soviet Union to quotas for Jewish emigration. Once again, Kissinger's duplicity destroyed his own efforts to arrive at an accommodation: he failed to inform Jackson of the Soviet foreign minister's letter refusing to accept "formal" numbers of Jews permitted to emigrate each year. Had Kissinger informed Jackson, he might have been able to cobble together an acceptable compromise.

In Isaacson's view the amendment "was a bad gamble by a stubborn senator, and it backfired, to the detriment of both détente and Soviet Jewry." This time Isaacson's quarrel is with a foreign policy that really was based on principles. He confuses détente as a means of policy with détente as an end of policy. The pursuit of détente as a supreme good made American policy hostage to the more ruthless and the less scrupulous (and the less democratic) power. For his part, Kissinger's hostility to the amendment was based on a visceral aversion to interfering in what the Soviet Union liked to call the "internal affairs" of another country. "Why is it our business how they govern themselves?" he snapped at State Department officials in 1971 when they recommended pressuring Pakistan for domestic reforms. (Such detachment did not seem to apply to Allende's Chile.) It was no accident, as the Marxists used to say, that the "Basic Principles" of détente negotiated by Kissinger and signed by Nixon in 1972 never mentioned human rights and explicitly accepted the Soviet definition of "non-interference" in the internal affairs of another country.

In 1974 Kissinger's report on "The Meaning of Détente" stated that "attempts to make increased freedom within the Soviet Union a rigid precondition for improved relations [would] risk obtaining... neither improved relations nor an increased regard in the Soviet Union for human rights." Yet it is now clear, in the light of the end of the cold war, that one of the most potent weapons that the United States could wield was precisely its emphasis on human rights. The Carter administration's insistence on human rights stripped the Soviet Union of its moral edge, of its claim to superiority over the Western democracies. Kissinger's fear of riling the Soviet Union manifested itself most awfully in 1975, when he advised President Ford not to meet with Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn. It surfaced again in the so-called Sonnenfeldt Doctrine, which recognized Soviet hegemony in Eastern Europe and was enunciated by Ford in his debate with Jimmy Carter. (The source of his famous gaffe on Polish independence was to be found in Kissinger's view of détente.)

The Helsinki accords, signed by President Ford in 1975, played a crucial role in undermining the Soviet empire, but it was the European countries that insisted on Basket III, the human rights one. Among the diplomats of the last twenty years, the true realist was not Henry Kissinger, but his prescient West German counterpart, Hans-Dietrich Genscher. It was Genscher, in emphasizing human rights and close diplomatic relations

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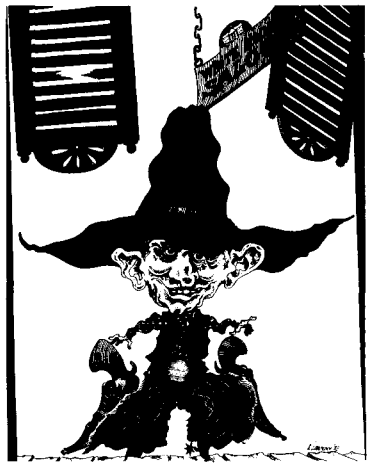

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with the Soviet Union, who struck the balance that eluded Kissinger, and finally brought down the Berlin Wall.

With his extraordinary agility, Kissinger managed to transform himself into a critic of détente once he left office. His astonishing volte-face marked a return to the views that he had enunciated before his tenure as national security adviser and secretary of state. Until 1968 Kissinger had espoused the most hawkish views. (In 1957 he had expressed his disdain for "peaceful coexistence," and in the '60s he argued that it was futile to engage in personal diplomacy with the Soviets "even at the highest level," and condemned détente as fostering Western illusions.) Two decades later he was desperately trying to curry favor with the Republican right that had helped to drive him from office in 1976 and brought about the rise of Reagan. By 1980 he recognized that incremental challenges did matter: "Incremental challenges not resisted will lead inexorably to greater challenges." His attacks on any kind of détente reached their hypocritical zenith during Reagan's second term—at precisely the moment, that is, when the Soviet Union was beginning to unravel, and productive accords could be struck. In 1987 he denounced Gorbachev as having

> cultivated the appearance of a new Soviet leader—appealing to Western predilections to reduce historical conflicts to a clash of personalities.... Common sense suggests that the principal causes of tensions are political. Chief among them is the Soviet proposition embodied in the Brezhnev Doctrine that proclaims all Soviet possessions as sacrosanct and everything else as subject to pressure or subversion.

This from the man who had bragged that he had been kissed "on the mouth by Brezhnev"! Kissinger's turnabout on détente was so brazen that it provoked even the dour Andrei Gromyko to express amazement, producing one of the few truthful statements in Gromyko's memoirs:

> To ignore principles, as Kissinger had frequently done, is a game that takes its toll. Having immersed himself in the world of his memoirs after leaving office, Kissinger tried to join public life again by offering his services to the Reagan administration. This was the administration which denigrated everything of value that had previously been achieved in Soviet-U.S. relations, yet Kissinger approached it without batting an eyelid, in the hope that the new president would want him in his Cabinet.

In his readiness to negotiate with Gorbachev and to remove medium-range missiles from Europe through the INF treaty (an accord that Kissinger denounced), Reagan recognized what Kissinger did not: that declinism was false, that the United States could negotiate from a position of strength. Kissinger's purblind approach to the fading cold war finally hit rock bottom in January 1989, when he propounded a scheme that became known as "Yalta II." Similar to the Code of Conduct signed at the 1972 Moscow summit and the Helsinki Final Act of 1975, Kissinger's Yalta II outlined a spheres-of-influence deal with the Soviet Union. Kissinger's scheme outlined a "framework of accommodation" between the two superpowers to be arranged by a secret envoy (guess who?) in which the Soviet Union would allow liberalization in Eastern Europe and the United States would agree not to exploit these changes in a manner threatening to Soviet security.

Kissinger was living in the past. When victory in the cold war was finally possible, he was recommending accommodation. He overlooked the fact that the United States no longer disposed of the fate of Eastern Europe, that the Warsaw Pact was already null and void except in name. Kissinger tried to sell George Bush and James Baker on his plan, but was rebuffed. And so, while Eastern Europe crumbled, he stood rather appropriately on the sidelines. He had only one final, incongruous link to the administration in Dan Quayle. Having coached Quayle for the 1988 vice presidential debate, he continued to court him. "To Kissinger," writes Isaacson, "Quayle offered a link to conservatives—and a chance, perhaps, to be influential someday in the future."

Only one thing endures from Kissinger's tenure as secretary of state: his celebrity. The blandishments of fame remained as alluring as ever for Kissinger. During the Nixon and Ford administrations, he transformed himself into a jet-setting star (with the always obliging aid of the Washington press corps). In the early '70s Kissinger dated Hollywood starlets, before settling on Nancy Maginnes, who had the social cachet of New York's Colony Club. And through the '80s he consorted with the likes of Oscar de la Renta, Annette Reed, and the Ertegun. According to Isaacson, "Whether it was Hollywood or Manhattan or Paris, he enjoyed a certain frisson among the rich and socially powerful." Kissinger himself referred to his new social circle as "the bratty rich." The social anxiety of this important historical figure, his constant calibration of his place in society, is acute and more than a little abject.

Kissinger's current entrée into the corridors of power comes through his firm Kissinger Associates, which has dozens of corporations wasting their money on his "secret" advice and earns him some $8 million per year. Isaacson broaches the issue of conflicts of interest, but one doubts that Kissinger's advice to his clients is what dictates the positions he takes in his ponderous op-ed pieces. As Stephen Solarz observed about Kissinger's defense of the Tiananmen Square massacre, it was not a matter of business: he has *always* been prepared to defend despotic regimes.

Kissinger's readiness to practice a tough brand of realpolitik, evidenced in his unwavering support for the Chinese dictators, leads Isaacson to describe him as a European, rather than an American, practitioner of foreign policy. This is to deal in straw men and stage figures: the straight-arrow American versus the devious European, John Wayne versus Peter Lorre. In fact, Kissinger's policies were time after time based on illusions. True realists like Hans Morgenthau, who distinguished between vital interests and peripheral interests, urged Nixon to pull out of Vietnam immediately. Détente was symptomatic of Kissinger's inability to understand the aspirations of the Soviet people; the Bush administration's halting response to the breakup of the Soviet empire typified the kind of Kissingerian realism that remained oblivious to new realities. The really remarkable thing about Kissinger's experience in Nazi Germany was that it left him oddly blind to the true nature of Soviet totalitarianism, and to the natural longings of the oppressed.

Kissinger should not be viewed exclusively through the European prism. Here is a man who lacerated himself in the quest for success, who misused his formidable talents, who refused to attend the seventieth anniversary dinner of *Foreign Affairs* because its outgoing editor, an old friend and colleague, failed to denounce Isaacson's book. His pursuit of importance has ended in sullen bewilderment and impotent rage at Senate committees and hostile biographies. His story is, of all things, an American tragedy.

JACOB HEILBRUNN is University Fellow at the Center for German and European Studies, Georgetown University.

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The Heart of the Matter

By Wendy Lesser

Black Dogs
by Ian McEwan

(Doubleday, 149 pp., $19.95)

Ian McEwan's career is sometimes seen by his critics as falling into two distinct clumps. The first, in this view, consists of his first three books: the stories in *First Love, Last Rites* (1975), the early novel called *The Cement Garden* (1978), and a second set of stories called *In Between the Sheets* (1978). The turning point is either just before or just after *The Comfort of Strangers* (1981), which in any case is seen as the transitional novel. And then, in this saga of the divided author, we have the "mature" McEwan: *The Child in Time* (1987), *The Innocent* (1989), and, now, one presumes, *Black Dogs*. The difference between early and late McEwan is supposed to be that the young writer, though enormously talented, was mainly interested in visceral shocks and thrills, while the older one is interested in ideas; the young man focused on sex, the older ponders love; the young one indulged in spectacularly horrific Grand Guignol effects, the older settles for more muted violence.

I don't subscribe to the myth of the two McEwans. I say this as someone who can barely hear the difference between early and late Henry James, and who cannot for the life of me distinguish a Graham Greene entertainment from a Graham Greene novel, so you may not feel inclined to trust me. But when an author is as obsessed with his themes as McEwan is (or James or Greene was), then petty niceties of subject matter and style do not alter his essential nature. These petty niceties are crucial to our interest in each novel; they are what enable him to go from one novel to the next without writing the same book over and over again, without boringly repeating himself. But they do not break his world in half.

The world of a great novelist—and McEwan is a great novelist—is continuous not only with our daily, lived world, but also with the slightly distorted, hyperreal, eerily patterned but surprisingly free world he has populated with all his fictional characters. When he sits down to write a new novel, he returns again as a traveler to that world, and the novel is the letter he posts out to us. The great novelist (unlike the clever, tricky novelist—I will refrain from naming names among McEwan's British contemporaries) does not construct an entirely new fictional world each time he writes a novel. He cannot choose to do that, as his inferiors can, because the world he visits in his fiction has a reality for him that is not entirely of his own willed making.

From the beginning, McEwan's world has been one in which sexual love holds both great allure and great peril; in which violence is a weapon of intimates; in which the self-enclosure of family life can be both comforting and terrifying; in which childhood, though seductive, must be escaped from; in which innocence is a danger to itself and others; in which one relies on the kindness of sometimes sinister strangers; in which time flows backward and forward, with last things influencing first as well as first last. McEwan's is a world informed by mass historical movements from totalitarianism to Thatcherism, but in his world these abstractions always take a human, immediate, personal form. His is a world where the rational mind struggles with madness, superstition, and faith—a fair struggle, in which we're not sure whose side to back. It is a world where the horrifying, the sad, and the comic intermingle; and it is a world where fear and its henchman, suspense, generally play leading roles. One reviewer described McEwan's last book as the kind of novel that would result "if Stephen King could write like Henry James," and in a way this is true of all his books. The horror lies precisely in the delicate turn of the screw.

In each novel from *The Comfort of Strangers* onward, McEwan has been fiddling with the nature of suspense—that is, with the relationship between fear and time. *The Comfort of Strangers* is pure foreboding. We feel throughout that something awful is going to happen, and in the end it does. (If you have only seen the movie, forget it. Pinter's idiosyncratic screenplay flattens the texture of the novel, making morbid nonsense out of what seems compelling and inevitable in

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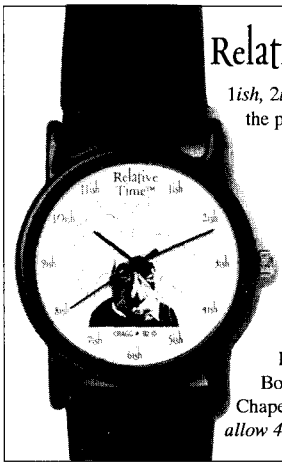

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the book.) *The Child in Time* creates nearly unbearable suspense out of an incident that took place before the novel opened: that is, the abduction of the main character's 3-year-old daughter. In *The Innocent*, McEwan locates most of the suspense within a historical fait accompli. By giving us a doomed love story set around the discovery of an Anglo-American spy tunnel in Berlin in the 1950s, he makes us fruitlessly hope for an outcome that actual history has already defeated.

And now, in *Black Dogs*, Ian McEwan pushes the limits of suspense even further. After telling us at the beginning of the novel that its two main characters lived into the late 1980s, he asks us at the novel's end to feel suspense as he unravels something that happened to them in 1946. He asks us, that is, to fear the past. The central debate in *Black Dogs* is the same one that surrounds McEwan's career: whether we are continuous with our own past or divorced from it. "We" in this case includes not only novelists and readers, but citizens of real life; and "our past" is not just the one we have lived for ourselves, but the one history has lived for us.

Jeremy, the narrator of *Black Dogs*, is a passive, evasive, only marginally literary fellow who nonetheless bears an oddly explicit resemblance to his author. Both men, Jeremy and Ian, are well-traveled Britons who have reached their mid-40s by the early 1990s; each has four children; Jeremy is married to a Jenny, Ian to a Penny. But Jeremy (no last name given) is no more the "real" McEwan than Marcel (no last name given) is the "real" Proust. Perhaps it would be more accurate to say that Jeremy is no more his author's stand-in than Colin was in *The Comfort of Strangers*, or Stephen in *The Child in Time*, or Leonard in *The Innocent*. No more, and no less. One of McEwan's insidiously powerful qualities as an author is the way he seeps inside other people—not just his youngish men, but also his women, his aging parents, his madmen, his scientists, his government officials, his small children. He has the gift, or the curse, of unwilled empathy.

The narrator of *Black Dogs* has it too, as we learn early in the novel when Jeremy goes to visit his dying mother-in-law, June Tremaine, in a Wiltshire nursing home. At the threshold of the visit, he finds himself already falling into someone else's existence:

> A shortage of oxygen made me yawn; did I have the energy for the visit? I could as easily have passed the untended reception desk and wandered the corridors until I found an empty room and a bed made up. I would slip between the institutional sheets. Check-in formalities would be concluded later, after I had been woken for my supper, brought on a rubber-wheeled trolley. Afterward, I would take a sedative and doze again. The years would slip by....
>
> At this, a minor flutter of panic restored me to my purpose.

Panic is the galvanizing emotion for McEwan's characters—often, as in this case, panic brought on by an intense but unintentional act of imagination.

Jeremy's purpose, as he repeatedly reminds us, is to write a memoir about June, or perhaps about June and her husband, Bernard—a memoir of their painful but enduring marriage: their initial shared political idealism, their passionate love, his rationalism, her mysticism, his socialist agenda (first Communist, then Labour), her religious faith, their consequent inability to live together, their equally powerful inability to let each other go. Their son-in-law has been selected, or self-selected, to record their tale. "Ever since I lost mine in a road accident when I was 8," Jeremy tells us in the first sentence of his preface, "I have had my eye on other people's parents." Despite the parent-borrowing that began in adolescence, he remained an orphan, essentially familyless, until he met his wife, Jenny, and became part of *her* family: not only the family they created together ("the simplest way of restoring a lost parent was to become one yourself"), but also the family she was born into, the estranged but still married Bernard and June.

Jeremy is not the only one in the novel to reach beyond his birthright. *Black Dogs* is filled with things and people and ideas crossing their natural boundaries, taking over territory that does not officially belong to them. On the largest scale this notion pervades the background plot of the Second World War, in the Nazi invasions of France and Poland. Less chillingly, the idea of broken boundaries emerges in the contemporary reference to the Berlin Wall coming down—an event that Jeremy and Bernard excitedly rush to witness. And on the level of detail it appears over and over in the metaphors throughout the book—for instance, in Jeremy's assertion that his older sister "Jean had spread her beautiful limbs—to adapt Kafka's formulation—across my map of the world and obliterated the territory marked 'sex,' so that I was obliged to voyage elsewhere," or in his musing comment about whether it was always raining when he visited June in the Wiltshire nursing home: "Perhaps there was only one such day, and it has blown itself across the others."

He may have his shortcomings as a meteorologist, but Jeremy is in general a persuasive guide. Just as he immediately and effectively conveyed the essence of nursing-home-induced passivity, so does he elsewhere seize on the one or two or three determining details that define a place, a time, a person. Reporting on the morning the Berlin Wall came down, he says: "We stood in the living room in our dressing gowns with mugs of tea, staring at the set. It did not seem right to sit. East Berliners in nylon anoraks and bleached-out jean jackets, pushing buggies or holding their children's hands, were filing past Checkpoint Charlie, unchecked." Elsewhere, in a few sentences, he gives us the 1960s in an upper-middle-class London household (the home of two of the parents the adolescent Jeremy has borrowed):

> Toby was at my place ... while I was at his, comfortable on the chesterfield in front of an open fire, a glass of his father's single malt warming in my hand, under my shoeless feet the lovely Bokhara that Toby claimed was a symbol of cultural rape, listening to Tom Langley's account of a deadly poisonous spider and the death throes of a certain third secretary on the first landing of the British embassy in Caracas, while across the hall, through open doors, we heard Brenda at one of Scott Joplin's lilting, syncopated rags, which at that time were being rediscovered and had not yet been played to death.

Brain, Heart, and Hand

Brain calling Hand:
Release at my command.

Hand calling Brain:
I do what you ordain.

Heart calling Hand:
Retrieve the blowing sand.

Hand calling Heart:
I've no such magic art.

Heart calling Hand:
You do not understand.

Hand calling Brain:
The Heart has gone insane.

Brain calling Heart:
Don't overturn the cart.

Heart calling Brain:
Hope hurts more than pain.

Brain calling Heart:
You are mad. Break apart.

Heart calling Brain:
I can't explain. I can't explain.

MARK O'DONNELL

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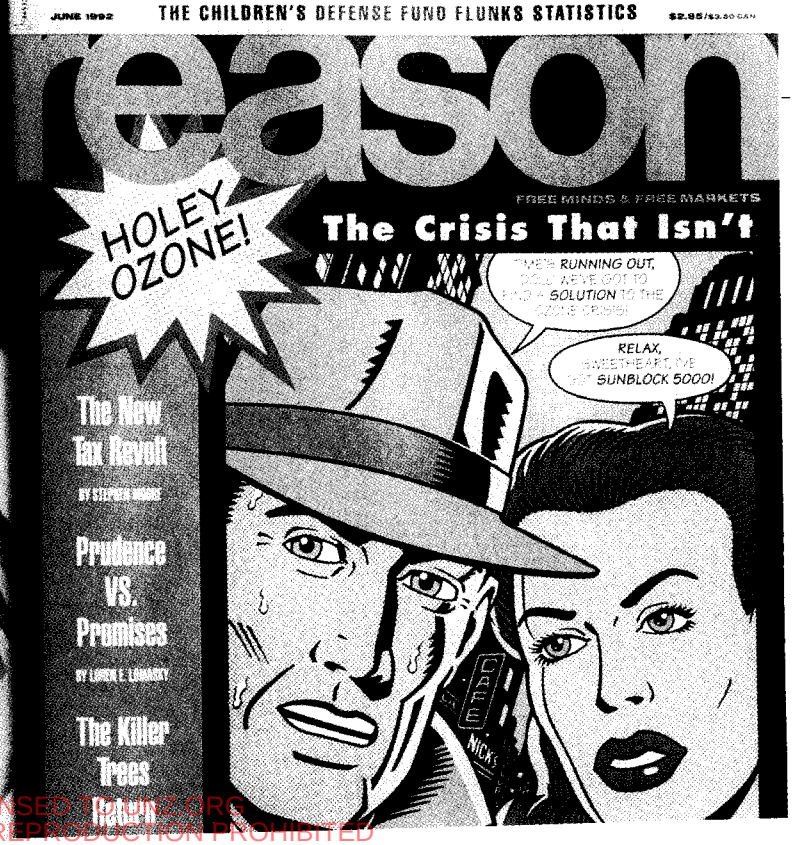

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There is something lilting and syncopated in Jeremy's prose as well—the off-rhyme of "staring at the *set* ... right to *sit*"; the little joke in "Checkpoint Charlie, unchecked"; the ironic counterpoint of the third secretary's "death throes" and the Scott Joplin "played to death." If such precision can be enormously pleasing, it can also risk seeming finicky or precious at times, but this too Jeremy takes account of. In the paragraph that immediately follows the Scott Joplin set piece, he admits that

> in describing this period of my life I have unconsciously mimicked not only, here and there, the superior sounding attitudes of my adolescent self, but also the rather formal, distancing, labyrinthine tone in which I used to speak, clumsily derived from my scant reading of Proust, which was supposed to announce me to the world as an intellectual.

Admits it, and thereby gets away with it.

If Proust is evident in the sentences of *Black Dogs*, Graham Greene is the shadowy eminence who colors the plot, visible not only in the central choices made by the two older characters (June's in favor of spiritual faith, Bernard's of politics), but also in the very notion of a crucial moment of choice. "Turning points are the inventions of storytellers and dramatists," Jeremy interrupts the plot to tell us, "a necessary mechanism when a life is reduced to, traduced by a plot, when a morality must be distilled from a sequence of actions, when an audience must be sent home with something unforgettable to mark a character's growth."

Jeremy, as usual, mocks the tactic and then continues to use it. He builds the whole story of June and Bernard's marriage, of June's life, around the moment in 1946 when, walking ahead of her husband in Provence, she meets on the path two vicious black dogs. June decides (or "realizes," or "imagines"—the nature of the thought process is part of what's in doubt) that these dogs are the incarnation of evil; at the same moment, she has a sudden apprehension of an infinite, invisible, but salvational good. This, in her own view, is the significant turn in her life's plot. And her family, though they fight her mysticism, unavoidably find themselves adopting the metaphor, the explanation, of the black dogs. It becomes family shorthand for incomprehensible evil, and also for a crucial turning point, a moment in history so powerful it can never be reversed. "Black dogs," mutters Jenny—incomprehensibly to Jeremy, who has only just met her—when they visit the site of a Polish concentration camp.

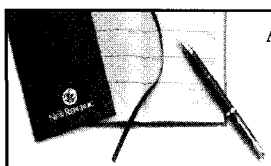
Only at the end of the novel do we finally get June's encounter with the dogs rendered directly, from her viewpoint (though we know from the context that this is actually Jeremy *imagining* her viewpoint; nothing in this novel can ever be rendered "directly"). I had thought—erroneously, as it turned out—that for once in McEwan's work the novel would not have a suspenseful ending. After all, Jeremy has by this time told us just about everything we need to know, several times over. It would be churlish of me to give away the few factual details that do remain hidden until the end. They do not, in any case, account for the power of the story. What accounts for the power—what produced the suspense, the fear—is that at the end of all the thirdhand information-gathering and secondhand relaying, we are actually going through the experience with June. We are there, in her world, in the recently liberated Provence of 1946, on a hot, dry path, a couple of hundred yards and a hairpin turn away from her husband, who misses the whole incident because he has crouched down to scrutinize and sketch a train of unusual caterpillars. (Bernard is, and remains, a passionate entomologist.)

If this moment sounds comic rather than horrifying, it is because I have succeeded in conveying only half of McEwan's technique. All the best scenes in his books are both comic and horrifying. Think of the heroine's dead German ex-husband being messily dismembered and stealthily removed by the protagonists of *The Innocent*; think of the car accident in *The Child in Time*. In McEwan, as in Hitchcock, the comic makes way for the terrifying, softens us up, gets us to loosen our hold on rationality. If he can get us to snort or giggle, McEwan knows he'll be halfway toward making us gasp or cry out.

We do not, I think, quite feel June's fear of absolute evil, nor do we fully absorb her revelation about absolute good. In that sense, *Black Dogs* is doomed to fail. But the novel so understands and collaborates in its own doom, so cunningly and intelligently sets itself up for this unachievable moment, that the effect can hardly be called a failure. *Black Dogs* proves to us what it set out to prove: that we can only by great effort and under special circumstances be made to fear a past that is over and done with; and that we are doomed—as individuals, and as individuals in history—*unless* we can fear the past. We need to think about history, but we also need to feel it. Neither June's mysticism nor Bernard's rationalism will alone be enough to save us.

And yet this makes the book sound too apocalyptic, as if its whole point lies only in its ending (which is also its beginning, and its center). There is, besides all the politics and philosophy, the texture of daily life. At one point June accuses Bernard of living only in the future, waiting impatiently for the social and economic improvement of mankind's welfare, thereby slighting the present. Bernard, in turn, might accuse her of living too deeply in the past, deriving her present too wholly from a single vanished moment. But *Black Dogs* itself, while attracted to both those perspectives, does neither. It lives in its own present: in the experience of "companiable lovemaking that is the privilege and compromise of married life"; in the feel of a house that has been empty for months and now has a single inhabitant, preparing for his family's arrival; in the bloodthirsty satisfaction of fist meeting face as a bystander knocks down a brutal child-beater; in the warmth of a summer day in empty, innocent, rural France. *Black Dogs* calls into question the whole distinction between a novel of ideas and a novel of sensation, for one of its important realizations is that sensation *is* an idea, and thought a sensation.

WENDY LESSER is the editor of *The Threepenny Review* and the author of *His Other Half* (Harvard University Press).



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Actually, there's a revival of interest in religion going on among the intelligentsia. And why not? Intellectuals have bought into every panacea and quack remedy to come down the pike, and are running out of substitutes for the Real Thing. Ostensibly bright people have pooh-poohed Hell, liberated themselves from morality, turned themselves into pooh-bahs, and created a Hell on earth for everyone else. Perhaps it's true that the Devil's cleverest wile is to convince us he doesn't exist.

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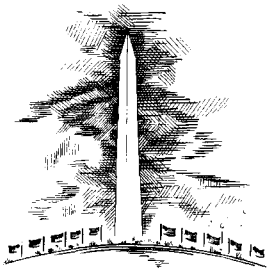
WASHINGTON DIARIST

Hip-hope

WHEN I CAME TO THE CAPITAL almost exactly a decade ago, it was a jolly, mean city. There was excitement everywhere, though excitement everywhere was giving way to dizziness. A popular new president was expounding the malleability of things. The old enemies of government were filling the new members of government with a ridiculous conviction of historical agency. The past, they insisted, was past. They had big plans, big power. The restaurants were bursting with giants in their time, who were confident that they would not leave the world as they found it. Conservatives were not disturbed by their love of change, and fearers of God were not hobbled by their worship of the work of human hands. Nothing would be allowed to rob the moment of its thrill. (It would be a few years before the world wittily reminded these innocents of its intractability. Those reminders are now called "the consequences of the Reagan revolution.") That thrill was owed also to a less lofty satisfaction, to an awful appetite for revenge and the humiliation of the recently deposed. The new administration was treating itself like a lustration. The government had the aspect of a gang. In America, some of the most dangerous gangs wear pinstripes.

THE DECADE CAME AND THE DEcade went. Some things changed for the better, some things changed for the worse, some things changed not at all. For me, those were the years of a great disabuse. Not of Reaganism, certainly; with the exception of certain important elements in its foreign policy and defense policy, it always seemed shabby to me. What the local spectacle disabused me of was a belief in pure beginnings and pure endings. Revolution, even the peaceful kind, is not like love: there is no second time, unless you are hooked only on the feeling (in which case you are, for societies and for women, a dangerous man). After you have observed the mottled fate of the finest intentions, and experienced the mixedness of the results of noble plans and drastic policies, you are left with a new axiom for the rest of your intellectual and political life. It is: do not be fooled again. There are extremes of enthusiasm that you must find embarrassing forevermore.

THIS MUST BE ONE OF THE REAsons I find myself anticipating Clinton's victory gladly but a bit dourly. My Democratic friends of the early '90s are beginning to remind me of my Republican friends of the early '80s. They have no irony about change. They feel historical. They have answers to everything. They no longer bother to disguise their raw interest in power. They are hoping to grind the others into dust. (The banishment of James Baker will be quite enough to appease my own low need.) And they are building a cult of the personality around their candidate, who does not appear to be offering any resistance. I get the feeling that many Democrats, having conflated the thwarting of their own careers with the thwarting of America, are about to conflate the resumption of their careers with the resumption of America. They are beginning to look, in sum, like dizzy critics of dizziness.



IS IT NOT ENOUGH TO JUSTIFY A vote for Clinton that he is supportable? Must he also be admirable? This invention of the leader is a tricky business; it accounted for a lot of what went wrong in the Reagan presidency, and it accounts for the most degrading figure in contemporary American history, I mean the bargain-basement Bonaparte from Dallas. Something is happening, I think, to Clinton. He is losing the sobriety that first recommended him for the stewardship of America after Reagan. He is exemplifying appetite when he should be exemplifying austerity. He is mistaking breadth of support for depth of support. He is running a timid campaign that preaches an end to timidity, and he is treating himself like a hero for it. (The myth of his "tenacity" in a "grueling" campaign is especially annoying. It was no more grueling for him than for others, and he himself put some of the gruel in the grueling. Anyway, he wants to be president.) His knowledge is looking more and more like condescension toward those who lack it. He seems insufficiently inward. As he approaches the presidency, gravity seems to be giving way to fun. But the greater Clinton's fun, the greater his distance from the people, most of whom are not having fun. It is beneath the dignity of a president, or a man who is about to be president, to aspire to the condition of celebrity.

I WILL VOTE FOR CLINTON BEcause his obsession with social policy seems to me to be the right obsession for this crumbling time, and because the collapse of the Soviet Union finally permits a vote mainly on grounds of social policy. And because Bush is a reed in the wind, or a wind in the reed. (And because I cannot *not* vote for the interesting and good Gore. Enough said.) But I hope that I will not be casting a ballot for a new innocence or a new intoxication. This country has had enough innocence and intoxication. Or rather, enough fake innocence and real intoxication.

I KNOW THAT CLINTON IS NOT AN innocent. If he insists on resembling John Kennedy, it is, I suspect, because he resembles Lyndon Johnson. I rather like his unembarrassed love of politics, though I would not go so far as my friend who declared that "it is only Slick Willie who can fix the country." The prestige of the anti-political in American politics has always been one of its most mischievous features, and Clinton can certainly "fix" that. (For this thanks must also go to Perot, who will go down in the history books as the man who restored the faith of Americans in the two-party system.) And yet there *is* an echo of innocence, of the old American gospel of newness, in Clinton's incantations about "change." It makes me worry that another eschatological disappointment is being prepared for the eschatologically inclined citizens of this country.

FOR SURELY THE MOST SALIENT characteristic of the problems afflicting this society—race, drugs, crime, the dying of the cities, the deficit—is the magnitude of their difficulty. These are not problems, they are conditions, thick realities, traditions of living. And so there is something wrong, intellectually but also practically, with programs of redemption, with the swaggering assurance that there will be solutions, and soon. Of course bold courses of action must be tried, but bold courses of action have been tried before. We are living, after all, in the ruins of liberalism *and* conservatism. After a while, therefore, boldness itself must begin to seem hollow. And so, even as I drag my dinner jacket out of mothballs, I glumly expect a series of collisions between the meliorist will of the next president and its intractable social and economic objects. His (and his party's) triumphalism will profit him nothing. The grueling is about to begin. He will have to learn to offend; to lose patience and to teach patience; to ward off despair, but not by means of illusion. A man from Hope should know how cruel such a place can become.

LEON WIESELTIER

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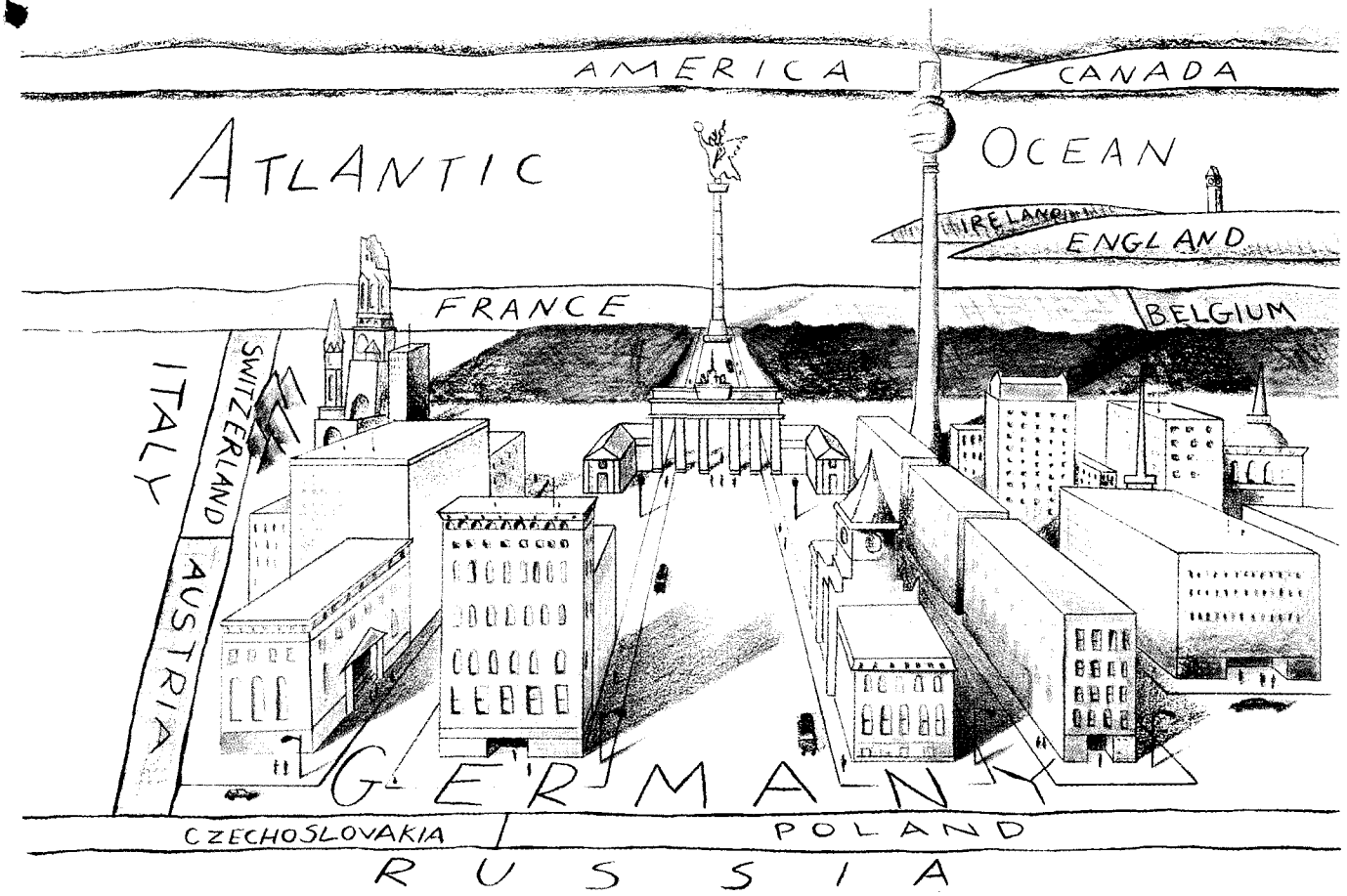

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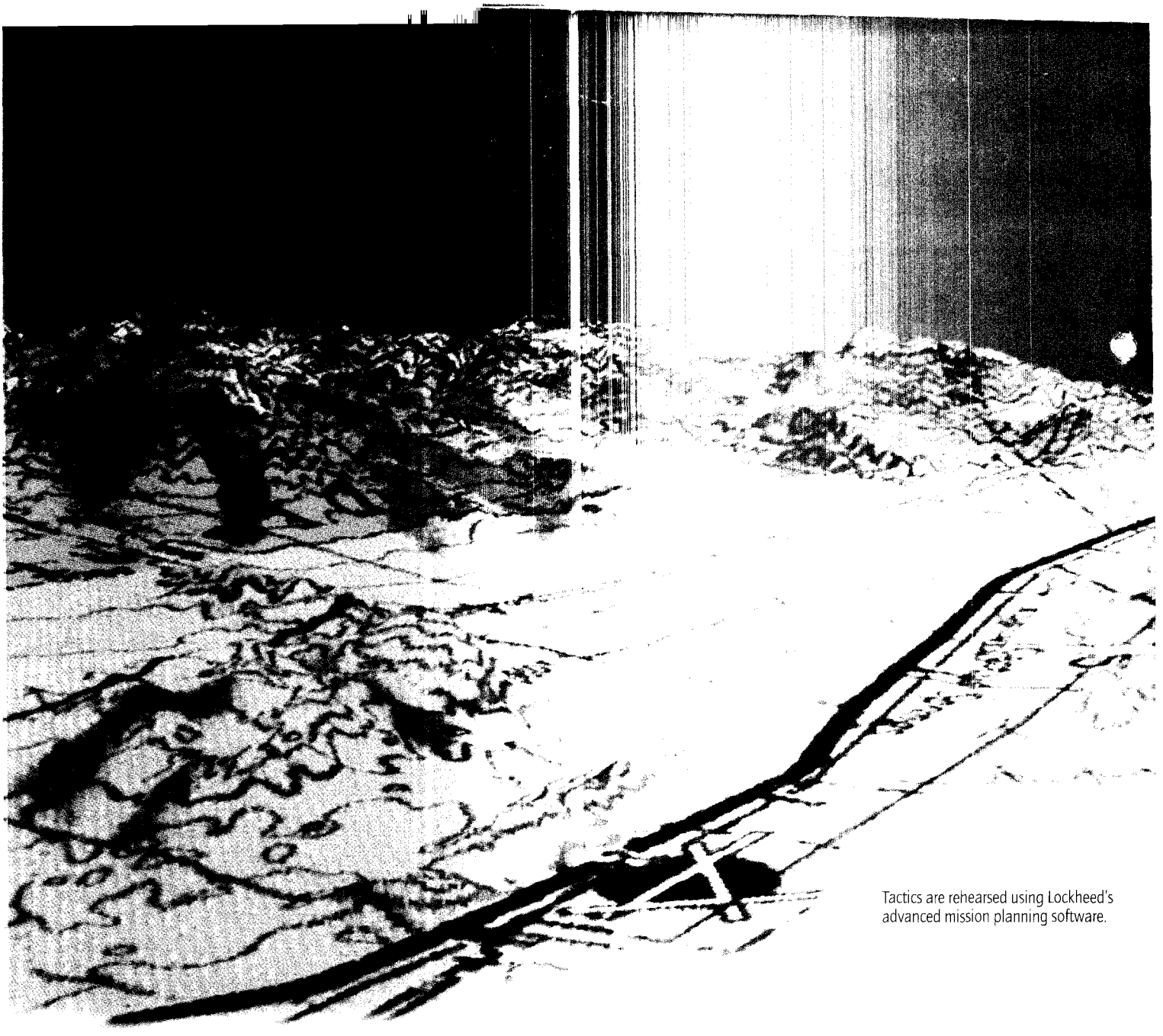

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